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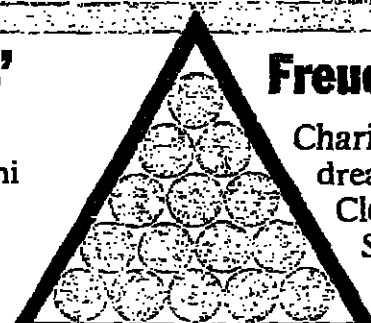
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City brokers stage revolt over plans for electronic trading system

London stock market chief is dismissed

By MELVYN MARCUS AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

MICHAEL LAWRENCE, the £342,000-a-year Chief Executive of the London Stock Exchange, was dismissed yesterday after a revolt by several powerful stockbroking firms.

The reason given by the Stock Exchange for the abrupt and unexpected dismissal of Mr Lawrence was a "loss of confidence". John Kemp-Welch, Chairman of the Stock Exchange, admitted that the departure of Mr Lawrence, the second chief executive to be sacked in two and a half years, was "undoubtedly a setback", although he hoped this would prove "temporary".

Mr Lawrence is understood to have been informed of the decision at a meeting with Mr Kemp-Welch which lasted less than half an hour yesterday morning. Mr Lawrence receives a basic salary of £240,000 and enjoys a one-year service contract. He received a £100,000 performance bonus last year.

Mr Kemp-Welch, the former senior partner of Cazenove, the City's most prestigious stockbroking house, will chair the Stock Exchange's executive committee pending the appointment of Mr Lawrence's successor.

Late last November, Mr Lawrence disclosed plans for the Stock Exchange to press ahead with the introduction of an electronic "order matching" system of share trading, despite bitter opposition from City market making firms.

Mr Lawrence described the development as a "very impor-

tant step for the Stock Exchange and for London as a financial centre" but it is no secret that his enthusiasm for competitive styles of trading was not shared by many Stock Exchange firms.

Major market making firms such as BZW, an offshoot of Barclays Bank, and Smith New Court, recently acquired by Merrill Lynch, the US stockbroking combine, had waged a campaign against electronic "order matching".

It is believed that a delegation of Stock Exchange board members met Mr Kemp-Welch on Wednesday evening and delivered an ultimatum to the Stock Exchange chairman. The delegation is understood to have been drawn from the Stock Exchange's Senior Appointments and Remuneration Committee.

Mr Lawrence, a former Finance Director at Prudential, the insurance company, was appointed in February 1994 after the previous chief executive, Peter Rawlinson, resigned following the £400 million Taurus trading system fiasco.

Mr Lawrence said last night: "I am disappointed to leave but I am happy with the programme of major initiatives and the excellent executive team. But the reforms must be allowed to continue unabated." Negotiations over compensation will start shortly. The Exchange has not ruled out the possibility that Mr Lawrence could receive a bonus for this year. Last night at his country home in

Cookham, Berkshire, which has a tennis court and swimming pool, his wife, Maureen, said: "He just came back at 4.30 this afternoon and said, 'I've been sacked. That's it'. I did not get much chance to speak to him about it, because he had an engagement this evening and had to go out."

Born into a lower middle class family in Harrow, North London, Mr Lawrence came from neither of the City's traditional backgrounds — working class and streetwise, or blue chip. He was educated at Watford grammar school and Exeter and Bristol universities, taking a first class degree in physics and a PhD in mathematical physics.

He became an accountant and was the Prudential Corporation's finance director when offered the Stock Exchange job at the age of 50. He and his wife run a private aviation company and private property group. He sails with his family and drives a red Aston Martin which he bought from Rowan Atkinson, the comedian.

After yesterday's board meeting Mr Kemp-Welch said: "While Mr Lawrence's departure reflects the loss of confidence in him by the board, it does not imply any change in the Stock Exchange's policy. Our objective is to be the market of choice. To achieve that, we have a large programme of work in train and this will be pursued vigorously." Mr Kemp-Welch emphasised that a steering committee had been formed to



Michael Lawrence back home in Cookham, Berks, after his sudden dismissal

"oversee the implementation of the decision taken at the Stock Exchange board meeting of 30 November, 1995 regarding the structure and regulation of the markets. That decision provides for the Exchange's service to include full electronic trading and

order matching." It was the Exchange's decision to press ahead with establishing a system of trading shares according to the number of orders placed rather than the existing system where dealers are forced to give a price before they know

the size of order, that has proved particularly damaging to Mr Lawrence. Market makers have warned that it is a threat to the market's liquidity.

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Blair's low tax pledge to businesses in Far East

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR today promised foreign investors low taxes and low inflation in a Labour-run Britain.

In his most audacious move yet to capture the Conservative mantle for economic competence, Mr Blair told Far East business leaders that a Labour government would be better placed than the Tories to keep Britain internationally competitive and an attractive investment prospect.

It would back free trade, keep economic policy tight and disciplined, avoid the boom-and-bust policies of the 1980s and regard low inflation as the "essential prerequisite" of long-term investment.

He pledged that Labour's tax rates would be aimed not merely at keeping highly skilled workers but attracting them. Promising that there would be no repeal of the main trade union legislation passed by the Conservatives, Mr Blair said it was no part of his role "to switch the clock back to the 1970s".

Mr Blair promised a more positive attitude towards the European Union and, a week after the defection from the Tories of Emma Nicholson, underlined his own belief in the politics of one nation. The new era of opportunity must not divide societies into two, with a secure and prosperous top half and undereducated, unskilled bottom half.

The Labour leader used a speech early today in Tokyo to the Keidanren, Japan's equivalent of the Confederation of British Industry, to underline that Britain's potential as a home for investors would be enhanced rather than diminished under Labour because of its plans for investment in reskilling and educating the workforce. His aim, and that of Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, who is touring the

United States, is to bury the image of state interference that has dogged previous Labour administrations.

Just staying on the right side of the convention that Opposition leaders should not criticise the British Government while abroad, Mr Blair said the possibility that there would be a Labour government in Britain, possibly within months and certainly by the middle of next year, was real.

"If the British people decide that the baton should pass to us, it goes without saying that in my view this will be of benefit not just to Britain but the wider world."

Stating that he wanted Labour to be seen as the party of business, Mr Blair emphasised:

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sed that some of the changes made by the Conservatives in the 1980s to dismantle the barriers to competition were there to stay. But now a new approach, a second era of change was needed. To compete in the world countries had to invest in new capacity but also in the flexibility of its people. The economics of the next century would be dominated by countries that saved, invested and innovated.

David Willets, the Public Service Minister, said it was "bit rich" for Mr Blair to promise the Japanese they had nothing to fear. While he was making reassuring noises his spokesmen were ranting against privatisation and demanding state intervention and spending, all things that would put off foreign investors.

Two held after teenager dies

Police have arrested two men in connection with the killing of teenager Anthony Erskine, who was killed to death by a gang of youths after going to the aid of his father. Officers broke into a house near the teenager's home in Stratford-upon-Avon to detain them. The dead teenager's twin brother spoke yesterday of the family's grief and outrage at the killing. Page 3

South Africans take Test series

England's latest batting collapse cost them the final Test, enabling South Africa to take the five-match series. England were all out for 157 and South Africa, needing only 67 to win, got the runs without losing a wicket. Page 36

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Thatcher joins attacks on RAF's Gulf War tactics

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BARONESS Thatcher has joined Britain's Gulf War commander in criticising the RAF's low-level bombing tactics during the 1991 conflict.

Lady Thatcher who was no longer Prime Minister at the start of the coalition air campaign in January 1991, has disclosed that the loss of air crew deeply upset her and she had raised the matter with ministers.

In a four-part BBC documentary starting this Sunday and marking the fifth anniversary of the Gulf War, she says: "They had to go in low and we were losing a pilot a night. I got very upset and said that there's something wrong with the way we are doing this, and let those views be known."

Her comments echoed those of General Sir Peter de la Billière, the British forces commander in the Gulf, who says in the documentary that he was overruled when he tried to stop the low-level bombing.

He told the Ministry of Defence: "I don't want to go on doing it." Yesterday, angered by the criticisms of the bombing tactics, RAF chiefs called a press conference to deny the allegations that they had wasted lives by continuing with the low-level raids. Four Tornados were lost in five nights of low-level bombing, with four members of the crews killed and four taken prisoner.

Air Chief Marshal Sir William Wroughton, who was the UK air commander in the Gulf War, denied that he had been ordered by the Defence Ministry to carry on with low-level bombing raids, despite the heavy losses. Sir William, who is now Commander-in-Chief RAF Strike Command, said he had been in touch with Sir Peter about the allegations. He said: "We were not held at low-level for longer than I as air commander felt we should be. I was not forbidden from changing anything. Low-level attacks stopped when we wanted them to."

He also said that, although he was always concerned about casualties, the losses on the first nights of the air campaign had not played a part in the decision to stop low-level bombing which was made after it became clear that the Iraqis were not going to launch large-scale air raids. That made it unnecessary to continue on page 2, col 4

Killing of head: boy is arrested

POLICE were last night questioning a 15-year-old schoolboy in connection with the murder of Philip Lawrence, the west London headmaster who was stabbed when he went to protect a pupil being attacked by a gang of youths outside his school (Stewart Tendler writes).

The arrest in Kentish Town was made after intensive investigations in north London. These centred on a gang thought to include young Filipinos, but police refused yesterday to confirm details of the boy or his background.

The boy is not a pupil of St George's Roman Catholic School in Maida Vale where Mr Lawrence, 48, was the headmaster. The school reopened yesterday and a spokesman said that children were coping well over the violent death of their head.

Scientists spend £750,000 on fruit pastilles

By KATE ALDERSON

AFTER 115 years of sweet-making, scientists have been called in, with the aid of £750,000, to discover the secret behind the chewy Rowntree fruit pastille.

Nestlé's York-based research centre and the Applied Biology department at the city's university have joined forces in an attempt to find out just what makes the pastille, and other "secret" food products, taste so good. The pastille derives from a recipe in 1881 and was developed by trial and error. But now a

team of scientists are investigating how the pastille achieves its texture. In the process it is being subjected to "nuclear magnetic resonance" and "capillary electrophoresis", as well as microsampling, to study the pastille's biopolymer mixtures — starches, pectins and gelatins — and how they react with each other and in the mouth.

Dr Steve Whitehouse, a senior scientist at Nestlé, said the making of the fruit pastille was an historical confectioner's art. "This project enables us to look at the process closely and achieve a greater

understanding. We are not looking to change the sweet but any product is forever under review with the object of improving it."

Dr Julian White of York University, said Unilever and three other companies were involved in the research, which is part-funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

"This is not simply about the pastille," he said. "But by understanding the science involved, various food producers will be able to develop different types of food with different types of texture."



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over insecurity, in tactical terms. Mr Blair's speech is intended to head off government claims that the economy is strong again.

The Labour view will be that the economy is not doing as well as it should, and the benefits are not being distributed fairly. In past elections, Labour has been defensive on the economy. He is now claiming the Tories' ground.

PETER RIDDELL

More than 90 per cent of the public are aware that there are fines for dropping litter but only 3 per cent thought the fine was more than £1,000. It is actually £2500.

More than 63 per cent of the 1,137 people questioned said that they had cleaned up litter themselves, while 19 per cent said they had called the council. But only 1 per cent had decided to report the matter to their MP.

[illegible]

Stratford-upon-Avon shocked by gang killing of teenager who went to father's defence

Brutal reminder for the tourist town that forgot murder existed

By CAROL MIDGLEY AND JOANNA BAILE

THE killing of a young man by a gang of youths in Stratford-upon-Avon illustrates the undercurrent of crime stirring beneath the surface of the Warwickshire town's genteel respectability, according to residents.

Anthony Erskine, 19, was beaten and kicked to death in the front garden of his home on the Clopton estate by youths who were taunting his father. His face was kicked with such ferocity that neighbours were unable to give him the kiss of life.

Anthony, a stockroom assistant at Debenhams in Stratford, was attacked after going to the aid of his father Harry, 52, who was being harassed by a group of young men. The family had suffered months of racist abuse from a hardcore of youths for some time because their mother, Dorothy, was born in Malta.

Police working on the case, including one who has served in the area for 20 years, cannot remember the last time there was a murder in the town. Violent crime in Stratford is below the national average — 3.3 violent crimes per thousand people every year — against a national average of 5.9.

But residents said yesterday that on some housing estates, away from the picturesque town centre and prosperous theatreland, many people lived in fear of small groups of bored youths who terrorised their neighbourhoods.

Every year the town plays host to 2.5 million visitors who see a peaceful market town lined with timber-framed houses and souvenir shops bulging with Shakespeare memorabilia. Yet beneath this affluent facade is crime on a



Anthony Erskine, above, and his twin brother Ian



scale that blights the lives of residents.

Stratford-upon-Avon District Council is planning to spend £250,000 on closed-circuit television in the town centre to combat the drunken gangs who use it as a stage for fights after closing time.

Jean Holder, leader of the Liberal Democrat-controlled council, said: "People from outside don't see that underneath the veneer of prosperity there is a very different side to Stratford. We have our fair share of trouble and there are

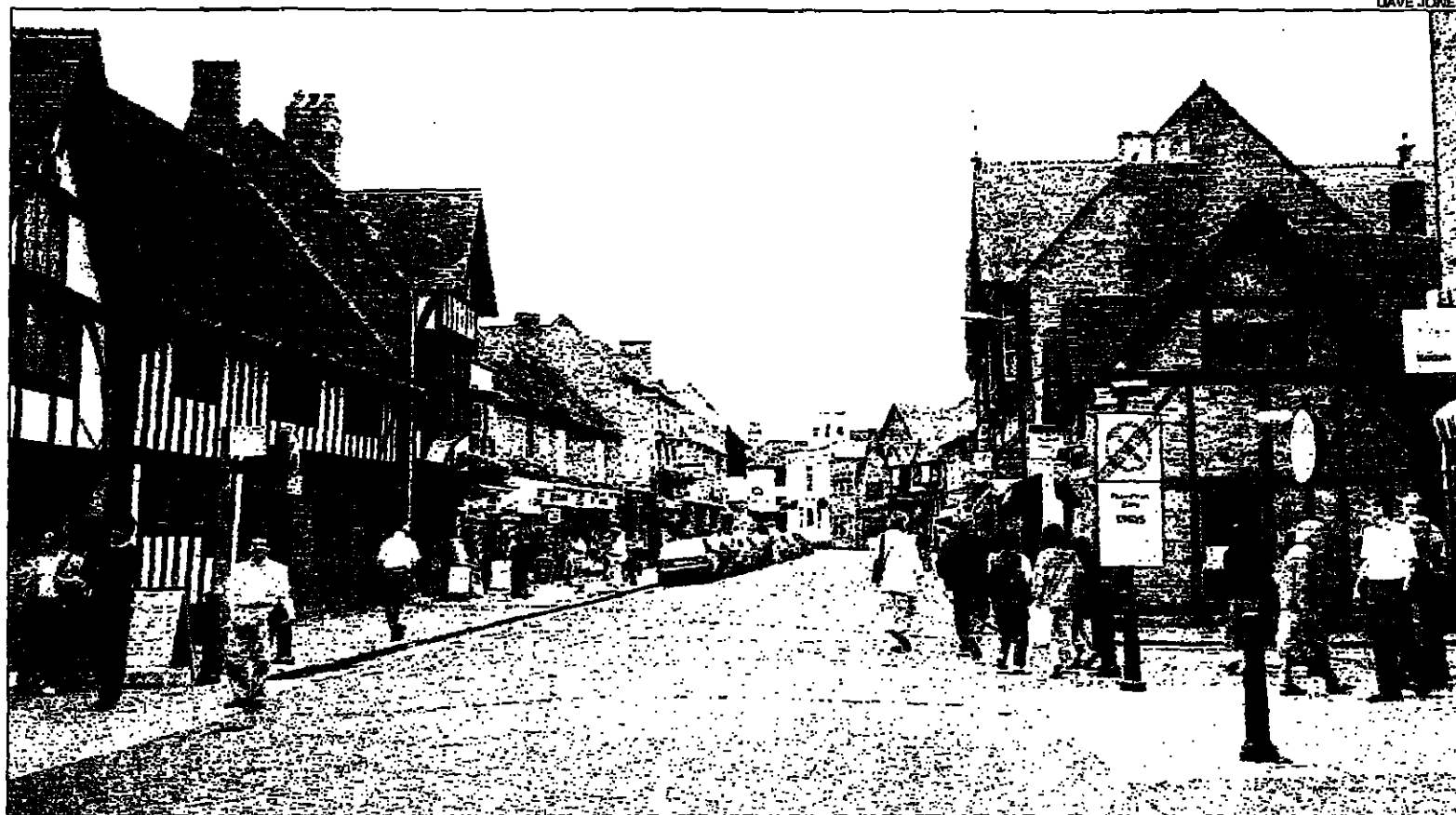
areas of deprivation and unemployment. Half the problem is that there are no decent jobs for young people, only menial low-paid ones in hotel kitchens."

Jean Greaves, 69, who has lived on the Clopton estate all her life, said violence had soared there over the last decade. "People from outside Stratford would never believe this goes on but this is what the tourists don't see. There's a lot of unemployment and I think that's what causes it."

Anthony's twin brother, Ian, said he was "kind and gentle". Ian Erskine vowed never to celebrate his birthday again as a mark of respect for his twin. With tears streaming down his face he said: "Anthony and I were very close. The family are devastated at his sudden and unnecessary death which has completely destroyed us."

At one stage Ian faltered with his prepared statement to a press conference because he was so overcome by grief. However, he recovered his composure and begged the local community to provide information to help police convict the killers. "This is not a petty crime. My brother was murdered. No one deserves loyalty after that," he said. "I was closer to him than the others. When Anthony went out I would always wait up for him and he always did the same for me."

Det Supt Tony Bayliss of Warwickshire police described the attack as horrific. He said: "Here we have a man in his fifties reconstituted with youths who had been apparently abusing him and his family. Then the son goes out to back up his father and is kicked and punched to death. This is yet another example of the violence pervading our society. It is another violent



Police stand outside the house where Anthony Erskine died. He was so badly kicked that neighbours were unable to give him the kiss of life

murder for no apparent reason." The dead man's elder brother Gary, 22, added: "Anthony never hurt anybody in his life."

"He had been picked on before but he always took the peaceful option and tried to talk his way out of it, to try to calm things down."

One neighbour, who has known the family since they moved into their neat council-built 1960s house 19 years ago when Mrs Erskine was pregnant with the twins, described Anthony as "a fantastic lad". She was greeted by the sight of Anthony's body in the garden of the Erskines' home, covered with a white sheet, at 5.45pm on Thursday.

As police maintained a cordon around the house, Elizabeth Davidson, 52, said: "I went outside to see what had happened and the police were taking the family away. I said 'what's happened Dorothy?' She said 'They've killed my Anthony.'"

Heather Harrison, store manager for Debenhams in Stratford, said Anthony had been employed there 12 months ago because of his conscientious and enthusiastic nature. Early last year he was voted employee of the month by his colleagues. Mrs Harrison said: "We are absolutely devastated. Tony was an extremely hard-working young man. Nothing was too much trouble for him."



son said: "We are absolutely devastated. Tony was an extremely hard-working young man. Nothing was too much trouble for him."

His former headmaster, Tim Sara, of St Benedict's Roman Catholic High School, Alcester, said: "He left two years ago but I remember him very well because he was a

polite, sensitive, caring and unassuming boy who was very supportive of this school. He was a super pupil, a real asset to us."

Anthony's mother, a catering manager at the Moat House Hotel in the town, was said to be inconsolable at her son's death. Gaynor Taylor, a neighbour, told how Gary

stood on street corners and terrorised people walking past. "No one goes out at night now. They will shout at you and make fun of you as you walk past. There are a lot of people around here whose husbands or sons are in prison because of what they have done."

"Harry wouldn't have hurt a fly. They are a very nice family, very quiet and respectable but this is the treatment they get," she said. Another neighbour said: "The trouble is that, with Anthony's family being quiet like they are, they never fought back. They would just take the abuse."

PC Nick Stephens, a former community policeman for the estate, said: "The vast majority of people here are lovely. But there is a hardcore of youths. I would say no more than ten, who go round making trouble and it is the same faces time and time again."

Police arrested two men yesterday in connection with Anthony's murder. Officers broke into a house near the teenager's home shortly after 3pm and arrested the men. A 17-year-old youth arrested shortly after the incident has been released on bail but police are still appealing for witnesses.

Wine bottle may give clue to student's killer

By RICHARD DUCE

A RARE bottle of champagne could prove a vital clue in tracing the killer of the French student Celine Figard, police said yesterday.

Mlle Figard, 19, accepted the bottle of Pascal Chretien champagne from its producer on her way through France before she arrived in England, hoping to spend Christmas with a relative. Only 60,000 bottles of the 1993 vintage were produced, none for export.

None of Celine's property was found with her body in a lay-by near Worcester on December 29 and police suspect that the bottle was taken by her killer and could even have been given away as a present.

Chief Superintendent John McCammon, the head of West Mercia CID who is leading the murder inquiry, said: "We want to hear from anybody who may have come across one of these bottles since December 19. Perhaps someone may have received one as a present or seen such a bottle during the Christmas celebrations."

He said police had established that Guy Mailliot, the French lorry driver who took Celine from her home in Haute-Saône to Folkestone, stopped at the champagne producers in Voigny, Auble, to buy 12 bottles.



The champagne label

One bottle was given to Mlle Figard as a present and then placed either in her suitcase or knapsack. The champagne is the strongest lead since police revealed Mlle Figard was last seen on December 19 climbing into the cab of a white Mercedes lorry at Chieveley service station on the M4 in Berkshire. Police are still checking all 1,200 such cabs in Britain.

Police were yesterday investigating the claims of a French television station that a right-

hand drive Mercedes lorry had been found abandoned in central France, but could not comment until further inquiries were made.

Mr McCammon earlier dismissed speculation that a serial killer could be responsible for the death of Mlle Figard, who had been strangled. "I would also stress, that at this stage, there is no evidence whatsoever to link Celine's murder with any other investigations," he said.

But as he spoke the Royal Ulster Constabulary announced their officers would travel to Worcester to compare details with an unsolved murder in Northern Ireland. Inga Maria Hauser, 19, from Munich, was found dead with her neck broken in a forest in north Antrim eight years ago after she vanished while travelling through England and Scotland.

An RUC spokesman said yesterday: "We are not saying the murders of Celine and Inga Maria are identical, but the circumstances are somewhat similar."

Fry agrees deal on walk-out

By DALYA ALBERGE

THE actor Stephen Fry, who walked out of the West End play *Cell Mates*, has agreed an out-of-court settlement with the show's producers.

Duncan Weldon of Triumph Prosecution Productions, who was suing Fry for £500,000 damages for breach of contract, has accepted £255,000 in what lawyers described as a mutually acceptable deal. Some £235,000 will be paid by the insurers who were also being sued.

The curtain came down on *Cell Mates* last March after Fry left for the Continent. The press gave chase and he eventually returned to London, saying he had suffered a nervous breakdown. In a statement Mr Weldon said: "Having had the benefit of expert psychiatric advice on the medical reports that Stephen Fry provided to Triumph, Duncan Weldon now accepts that Stephen Fry was too unwell to continue to perform in *Cell Mates*."

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Man who bought lost golf balls is not guilty of receiving stolen goods

By JOHN SHAW

THE owner of a golf driving range who bought old balls collected by schoolboys from a local course was cleared of receiving stolen property yesterday.

Andrew Goodridge, 28, who runs the Bury driving range at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, said outside court after the prosecution had been discontinued: "The case should not have been brought. It was ridiculous. It has been a complete waste of time and money."

The prosecution had been brought under Section 22(1) of the Theft Act 1968. Mr Goodridge, 28, of Lark Valley Court, Farnham St Martin, was accused of receiving balls stolen from the Farnham

Park golf club, an 18 hole course near the town, between July 1 and August 10.

But Paul Forshaw, of the Crown Prosecution Service, said during a brief hearing that a notice discontinuing the prosecution would be served on Mr Goodridge.

William Jackson, 42, his solicitor, said Mr Goodridge had incurred considerable legal expense and asked for costs which were granted.

Mr Jackson said he understood that the police had pressed ahead with the case without taking advice from the CPS.

Mr Goodridge said the golf course was foreign-owned and a sign in the bar indicated that any golf balls lost for more than five minutes became the property of the club.

Two schoolboys, aged about 15, had been found in one of the ponds on the course by a greenkeeper, and the matter had been reported to the police.

Mr Goodridge said he had been unable to believe it when he was accused of receiving; but he had co-operated and had gone to the police station. "I went down there for a tape-recorded interview but the officer got nasty and treated me like a criminal."

It was a tradition of the game, he said, that lost balls found on a course were often later sold on to professional shops. It had been accepted that balls found by greenkeepers were a perk of the job.

"People who have come to my range since this case have

laughed about the whole thing. It is just ridiculous." He said he would not be making a complaint. The costs of the case had not been determined but, he said, were likely to run into hundreds of pounds. The two boys involved had been cautioned.

The course was laid out in 1974-75 and is owned by a company called Malsuzato Hawaii Incorporated, based in Hawaii. A spokesman confirmed the existence of the sign claiming lost balls for the club, but he denied any campaign against Mr Goodridge. He said that the club had not instigated proceedings against him. "We did not press for any charges nor were we consulted at any time by the police concerning this case."

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Cousins go to court over ancient earldom and a fortune



Staking claim: Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

TWO cousins from Scotland's premier family met in court yesterday to compete for the title of Earl of Selkirk and a £500,000 fortune.

Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton, cousin of the Duke of Hamilton, brought an action in the ancient court of Lord Lyon in Edinburgh claiming he is the rightful heir to the 10th Earl of Selkirk, who died over a year ago aged 88.

Mr Douglas-Hamilton's claim is being opposed by Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, younger brother of the Duke of Hamilton and MP for Edinburgh West. Lord James Hamilton, a Scottish Office Minister, disclaimed the title of Earl of

Selkirk four days after the tenth Earl's death to allow him to remain a Conservative MP and to vote for the Government in the crucial European Finance Bill. Had he not disclaimed the title immediately, the Government would have faced a by-election.

Although Lord James Hamilton, 53, cannot now become Earl of Selkirk he is fighting the case on behalf of his son, John Andrew, 17, who will become Master of Selkirk if Lord James wins and will inherit the earldom on his father's death.

The two cousins, accompanied by their wives, exchanged pleasantries and shook hands before the case began yesterday. The hearing was presided over by Lord Lyon King of Arms, Sir Malcolm Innes of

Edingight. Lord Lyon Court sits in chambers every day and traditionally adjudicates on disputed titles. It only rarely hears cases in public.

While the cousins insist their fight is friendly both were represented by QCs and are going to considerable expense to stake their claim.

The earldom of Selkirk was created by King Charles I in 1646 and bestowed on the king's cousin Lord William Douglas. But the case hinges on the interpretation of a document written in Latin in 1688 stipulating who may inherit.

Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton's claim to the title is on the basis that he is the eldest son of the earl's younger brother Malcolm. His case is that the diploma of 1688 intended that the titles of Hamilton and

Selkirk should remain separate and that all existing male descendants of the earl's brother should be exhausted before the earldom reverts to the Duke of Hamilton.

Lord James argues that the diploma of 1688 makes it clear that if the Earl of Selkirk dies with no male children and no younger brothers, the title reverts to the Duke of Hamilton and is passed to his immediate younger brother. Lord James is the immediate young brother of the current Duke.

Lord James is often described as the nicest man in the Commons. He lives in a mansion overlooking the sea at North Berwick and is the father of four children, including twins.

He was educated at Eton and

Oxford where he gained a boxing Blue and he has published several books on flying.

Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton, 56, was educated at Gordonstoun and studied law at Edinburgh. He is a manager in the trustees department of the Bank of Scotland. His father, Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, was briefly Tory MP for Inverness-shire. Lord Malcolm was killed in an aircraft crash in the Cameroon jungle in 1964.

Mr Douglas-Hamilton has four children and lives in a fortified tower set in 20 acres in the Scottish border town of St Boswells.

Lord Lyon heard both sides' arguments yesterday and a judgment is expected within three months.



Fighting for son: Lord James Douglas-Hamilton

'Britain has got to do better'

Water industry is incompetent, says Princess Royal

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE Princess Royal criticised the water industry yesterday for allowing a year of supply shortages in a country with abundant rainfall.

Even taking into account the past year's unusual weather conditions, Britain was facing a situation that no one would have thought possible ten years ago, she said. "I cannot help feeling that there must have been inefficiency and incompetence."

Water companies say that last summer's drought was the worst in more than 100 years and that they cannot always maintain supplies in such conditions.

The Princess made her remarks in an address to the annual Oxford Farming Conference in which she singled out water supplies as the most crucial determinant of the world's ability to grow crops for an expanding population.

One of the most useful contributions the West could make would be to provide developing countries with the expertise to enable them to use limited water resources wisely, the Princess told farmers.

bankers and businessmen attending the conference. But the West's ability to help would be undermined if even countries such as Britain could not manage their water resources properly. "What can we say to people [in Africa] who have very little water?", she said. "We have got to do better."

In a later interview with the BBC, the Princess said: "In the UK we always thought the climate would provide enough water for us, and we are not paying strict enough attention to the increases in uses of water and the way in which it should be used."

Elsewhere in her speech to the conference, the Princess, who is president of Save the Children, said that developing countries should not simply copy the west aspects of the highly intensive agriculture, dependent on large amounts of fertilisers and pesticides, from which farmers in the West were now trying to escape. "We do not want developing countries to make the same mistakes as we did," she said. "The trouble is that

they see their mistakes as the quickest way to get a return."

Earlier, Eugene Moos, the United States Under-Secretary for Agriculture, gave a warning that the world could face food shortages over the coming years. "Given the expanding import demand in Asian markets, the economic growth in developing countries, Latin America, Central Europe and the States of the former Soviet Union, we are moving away from a world surplus situation to an era of growing demand," he said.

The Princess's strictures came as Ian Byatt, the water industry regulator, threatened to take a tough line with water companies that tried to avoid paying compensation for supply cuts because of burst pipes and mains in the recent thaw.

Yorkshire Water has promised to pay £10 compensation to customers who were without supplies for more than 24 hours as a result of the burst. A Leeds city councillor, John Sully, called the figure an "insult" and business leaders in the city condemned it as inadequate.



Anthea Turner, the lottery draw TV presenter, gets a security escort and a £60 million backdrop of prizemoney at the Royal Bank of Scotland yesterday

Lottery punters are playing for £60 million

BY LEVIA LINTON

CAMELOT put £60 million on display yesterday to show the nation what it would be playing for in this weekend's lottery. Deep below the Royal Bank of Scotland in north London, bundles of £10 notes were piled 5ft 4in high, 13ft 6in wide and 3ft 4in deep. Camelot will not pay out in cash, however. Winners will get cheques ready for instant clearance.

Ronald Biggs, who took part in the

Great Train Robbery and remembered how it felt to count £1 million in cash, said from his exile in Brazil yesterday: "It didn't make me happy." He spoke of his reaction to his big cash haul: "I started out with exactly £147,000 and began giving it away until I reached £100,000 and put the brakes on and told myself to stop being so silly. I admire generosity and like to feel I am a generous man."

Four out of five adults in Britain are expected to take part in this weekend's

National Lottery. Hundreds of companies, including building societies, solicitors, architects, engineering and printing firms, have taken out insurance with Fielding Mann, a firm of brokers in Leeds, against workplace syndicates winning the jackpot and staff walking out. A policy offers between £25,000 and £300,000 cover against two or more employees walking out for an annual premium of between £50 and £300.

Nigel Benbow, of the Institute of

Management, said that the 14 million-to-1 risk was so slight that most bosses would be better off joining the syndicate and spending the insurance premium to keep their staff loyal.

Ticket sales are expected to top £80 million. Virginia Bottomley, National Heritage Secretary, defended the huge jackpot, saying that it would mean more money for good causes. "I think the size of the prize is part of the fun of the game," she told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

Church charity to sue priest for missing money

BY STEPHEN FARRELL AND RUTH GLEDHILL

THE governors of a Church of England charity are to take an Anglican priest and a Labour Party agent to court to recover missing funds after a Charity Commission inquiry exposed "a web of conflicts of interest, patronage and nepotism".

The Rev Graham Pattison faces eviction today from The Master's House at Sherburn Hospital, Durham city. He was given eight weeks' notice in November but last night there was no sign of him leaving. Governors of Sherburn Hospital, now an old people's home, will decide what to do at a special meeting on Tuesday if the priest, his wife, Valerie, and their two adult sons are not prepared to leave. Mr Pattison, 56, has refused to comment since Charity Commissioners criticised him and another governor for using hospital funds to buy expensive cars and a pension for his wife.

A hospital source said: "The governors will do whatever it takes to get him out. They will get a county court judgment, get the bailiffs in, anything. He says he has nowhere to go but we do not believe him."

"He was paid £12,000 a year and his wife was paid £35,000. You are not telling me that after all those years and those salaries he hasn't put something aside."

Stephen Black, administrator of Sherburn Hospital, said: "Our solicitor will be instructing a barrister on the governors' behalf to proceed with a civil claim. There is a board of governors in place now with a resolve to ensure that what has happened never happens again."

Although Alan Martin, the investigating commissioner, found no evidence of dishonesty on the part of Mr Pattison or Ron Morrissey, the agent for the City of Durham's Labour MP, he urged the governors to seek restitution of £42,000 not accounted for.

Between 1986 and 1988, donations of £42,000 were paid into a private account, Interchurch Agency Fees,

which was never audited and whose signatories were Mr Pattison and Mr Morrissey. In spite of repeated requests Mr Pattison failed to explain how the money was used, raising "very serious doubts about the possible misuse of charity funds", according to the committee's report.

Three vehicles, including a Daihatsu Four Trak, were donated to Interchurch by the charity and the Four Trak was sold by Mr Morrissey within a few months. The report says: "There is clear evidence that no donations were needed by Interchurch/Skill Training."

Interchurch was able to invest £700,000 in a Spanish property development company in 1989.

The Interchurch Agency Fees account was also used to buy cars for senior managers and Mr Morrissey received extra monthly payments of £300 to £350.

Another project, Compass, received £230,000 in grants from Sherburn Hospital but no audited accounts were presented. The committee could find no evidence of how £175,000 paid in direct grants to Compass was spent. The committee noted "with concern" that the Compass project worker was Mr Morrissey's wife, Doris. The committee also expressed "grave concern" that £100,000 was paid over three years to establish a pension for Mrs Pattison.

Because of an endowment, the hospital, run as a home for about 90 old people, has 2,500 acres of farmland, £10 million in investments as well as mineral-rich land. The hospital buildings are worth more than £12 million.

Throughout the 1980s Mr Morrissey was chairman of the charity and Mr Pattison its master. The hospital is run by a board of 16 governors. The Bishop of Durham, although lacking administrative power, appoints the master from a list of three given him by the governors, and hears an appeal by the master if dismissed by the governors.

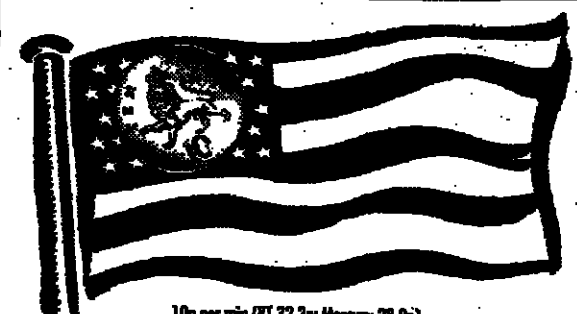
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One murder count dropped at magistrates' court

Retired carpenter accused of killing three in war atrocities

By Bill Frost

ONE of the four charges of murder against the first man in Britain to face prosecution for alleged Nazi atrocities committed in German-occupied Eastern Europe was dropped yesterday when he appeared in court.

Szymon Serafinowicz, an 85-year-old retired carpenter, remains accused under the War Crimes Act 1991 of killing three unknown Jews in Belarus — part of the former Soviet Union — between November 1941 and March 1942. No plea was entered for any of the charges yesterday as committal proceedings began, but his lawyer made plain at an earlier hearing that they would be vigorously defended.

In the unlikely setting of Dorking Magistrates' Court in Surrey, Mr Serafinowicz, a widower, squinted and blinked as the clerk asked him

committal proceedings against Rosemary West last February, had told the media that dire penalties were in store for those who flouted his instructions. "Heavy fines or imprisonment could result," he said, frowning over his spectacles.

Mr Serafinowicz, allegedly a commander in the local police in Byelorussia, came to Britain as a refugee in 1947. He was charged in July, the first person to face charges under the War Crimes Act 1991, after a two-year investigation by Scotland Yard's war crimes unit.

Yesterday Mr Serafinowicz, dressed in a shabby car coat, pullover and thick cotton shirt, frequently had difficulty hearing — cupping his hand to his ear and frowning — as the case against him was made by John Nutting, QC, for the prosecution.

Last night Mr Serafinowicz's bail was renewed on condition that he does not leave Britain, does not apply for a passport and continues to live at his present address in Banstead, Surrey. The hearing was adjourned until February 19 to allow witnesses to travel to Britain.

Court officials have been told that up to 26 witnesses, from Russia, the United States and Israel, would be called. The Crown Prosecution Service will have to arrange for interpreters in at least four languages.

Committal proceedings at Dorking are expected to last until April and will cost an estimated £1.5 million. A media annex with an audio link has been set up to accommodate the throng of reporters covering the case.

Dorking appears unmoved at being chosen as the venue for Britain's first War Crimes prosecution. The only evidence that the town is interested can be found in telephone kiosks near the court.

A right-wing organisation styling itself The Voice of Reason has put up cheaply printed stickers reading: "No War Crimes trials! Hands off OAPs. We want British justice — not Zionist vengeance."



Szymon Serafinowicz arriving at Dorking Magistrates' Court in Surrey yesterday



to confirm his name. Clearly in some difficulty, he cupped a hand to his ear and she repeated the question loudly.

Closing his eyes against the powerful ceiling lights, he confirmed his name, address and date of birth. He was then told that one of four counts of killing Jews after the German invasion of Belarus had been withdrawn.

The frail pensioner had been driven into a rear courtyard of the courthouse in the back of a police Rover past a posse of photographers and TV cameramen.

Peter Badge, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, told the press — foreign journalists in particular — that the factors behind the withdrawal of the charge could not be reported for legal reasons. Earlier, Mr Badge, who was involved in

GEOGRAPHERS' CONFERENCE

Supermarkets 'damage British fruit growers'

REPORTS BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

BRITISH supermarkets were accused yesterday of bullying tactics that were destroying the horticultural industry and forcing customers to pay inflated prices for fruit and vegetables.

Caroline Dumontell of the science policy research unit at Sussex University told the conference at the University of Strathclyde that the dominance of a few supermarket chains was making it harder and harder for small growers of fruit and vegetables to make a living.

The supermarkets, led by Sainsbury's and Tesco, preferred to buy from abroad, and refused to give British growers secure contracts, she said. As a result, the number of horticultural holdings had declined by a fifth between 1987 and 1993, and fresh fruit and vegetables were the largest single item in Britain's trade deficit.

By buying direct from suppliers, the supermarkets had undermined the wholesale markets through which growers had once been able to sell their produce. In 1974, she said, there had been 150 main wholesale markets in Britain; now there were only 37. Of the 11,000 growers left,

she estimates that only about 2,000 who sell to supermarkets are very profitable. The rest must find markets through farm shops, or the declining number of small greengrocers.

She said that in spite of the tough tactics used by the supermarkets, British consumers pay more for fruit and vegetables than those in other countries.

"It doesn't deliver the cheapest produce to the shopper," she said. "Actually fruit and vegetables are quite expensive here. The profit margins have been exorbitant."

The dominance of the supermarkets was increasing, she said: in the 1970s they had about a quarter of the trade in fresh fruit and vegetables, but now they had 60 per cent. This is predicted to rise to 80 per cent by 2000.

Apple-growing had been one of the principal casualties, she said. "France has replaced the indigenous apple producers. In the last year, 14 per cent of British apple orchards were grubbed up, after the Government introduced grants for growers wanting to get out of apple-growing." Ms

Dumontell's study is based on questionnaires sent to 255 growers around the country and face-to-face interviews with supermarket buyers, importers and others.

One of the main problems faced by British growers was the lack of binding contracts with the supermarkets. "What they do is have discussions in the down-season and give vague undertakings to buy."

"But when the time comes they can say they don't want the produce, because the weather is cold, or because they have just had a consignment from Chile," she said.

They could not be so high-handed with foreign suppliers, as once the produce had been imported they had no option but to sell it. With British producers it was too easy simply to turn their products away.

Ms Dumontell also said the pressure was leading to unhealthy production practices, with the same crops being grown on the same land year after year. This could lead to disease and the spread of pests.

Weekend Shopping, page 8

Secret of long life lies in the value of your house

IF YOU want to know how long somebody is going to live, look at the value of their house, the conference was told yesterday.

Dr Daniel Dorling of the University of Bristol has compared the health and longevity of people throughout England and Wales with their wealth, as measured by the value of their houses. His results show that greater wealth means longer life and allow him to predict, for each group, how much longer they would live if they were a little richer.

His figures are based on building society records, so only include those with mortgages. In the poorest elector-

al wards, the average equity people have in their houses is less than £100; in the richest, around the outskirts of London, it is more than £120,000.

Those in the poorest wards live on average for 72.5 years (men and women taken together) while those in the richest ones 74.1 years. The greatest gains in life expectancy are made by the poor who gain a little more wealth.

"Where the average equity is less than £15,000, every extra £100 adds a day's life expectancy," he concluded. "But among the richer people living in wards where the average equity is more

than £60,000, an extra £100 adds only three hours to life expectancy."

Ugandan Asians who arrived in Britain in 1972 with £50 in their pockets have since made rapid progress up the social ladder, a study at the University of Wales in Swansea has shown. While a quarter of the Ugandan Asian men were classified as managerial in 1981, by 1991 that had risen to 37 per cent. Ugandan Asian women in managerial positions showed an increase from 6 per cent to 24 per cent over the same period, while the proportion of white men so classified rose from 23 to 28 per cent.

Six million fighting at the frontier

By Richard Ford

ON June 22, 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, a surprise attack on Stalin's Russia, his former ally. Armies of three million men on either side, with air and naval backing, faced each other on the German-Russian frontier. During the first

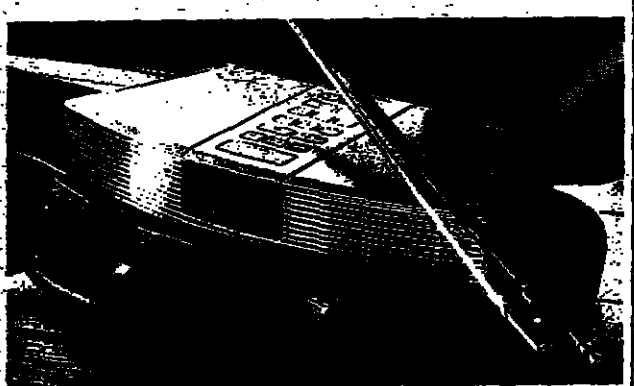
weeks of the war on the Eastern Front, the German army made sweeping advances, achieved vast encirclements of Russian troops and took thousands of prisoners.

The bulk of the German army was to break the Soviet force in Byelorussia and then assist in clearing the Baltic area and capturing Lenin-

grad. Hitler's attack began with air attacks which destroyed the bulk of the Soviet air force and disrupted headquarters and supply dumps.

In six days, the Germans had enveloped Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, and captured 280,000 men. But soon the German army was confronting the problems of its

initial successes with stretched supply lines and Soviet troops still capable of resistance. By December leading elements of the German army were almost at the city limits of Moscow but Stalin launched a counter-offensive and by the spring of 1942 both sides had fought each other to a standstill.



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From ancient Assyria to laser surgery, the eyes have it

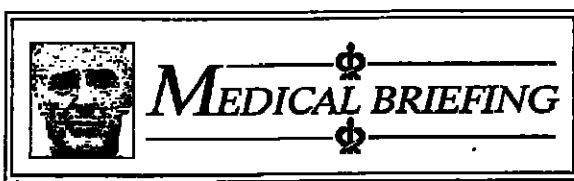
A pair of spectacles recovered at low tide from the Thames foreshore has been dated to about 1500 and ranks as about the oldest surviving pair in Europe.

Spectacles were invented in Italy in 1285, although simple lenses made of various materials were well established in ancient Rome and have been found in the ruins of Carthage and at Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria.

The Thameside spectacles were of a simple practical design, probably uncomfortable to wear, and certainly

not intended in any way as a fashion accessory as modern versions now are. Robert Chappell, a member of the council of the College of Optometrists and an expert on the intricacies of spectacle manufacture, said that although today's choice had never been greater the difference in the spectacle frames was now one of appearance rather than practicality.

It is, in fact, now more difficult to find a comfortable pair than it was 30 years ago. In the past, before spectacles were regularly changed by their owners to keep up with



Dr Thomas Stuttford

fashion, they were available in several different breadths and with different arm lengths. They were also manufactured with varying bridge sizes to accommodate those who had small or large noses. Now spectacles are

made with only one standard bridge size, in two breadths and the patient has the choice of either a long or a short arm.

A pair made of the newest, lightest and most fashionable material, titanium, will cost about £300, while £1,000 would buy some gold ones and for rather more Cartier is pleased to supply gold frames studded with diamonds. The best value for money must still be the rolled gold NHS style half moons at about £95. They take some finding but Mr Chappell says that they are still available.

Nero used a polished, shaped emerald to view the gladiators fighting but many rich and well-educated Romans dispensed with specta-

cles and hired a young man to read their manuscripts aloud. The rich are once again able to throw away their spectacles, relying on laser therapy rather than having someone to do their reading for them.

John Grindle, a consultant ophthalmic surgeon who practises in London, said that, by altering the shape of the cornea with laser therapy, 95 per cent of those who are considered suitable for surgery, and who have a refractory error of less than minus three, can do without glasses. The success rate falls as the

degree of short sightedness increases but minor changes in the laser have extended its use so that now 90 per cent of those who have severe short sightedness — up to minus ten — can benefit from laser treatment at a cost of only £395 an eye and can expect afterwards only to have to wear spectacles for watching television, using a computer or driving.

The skill in obtaining consistently good results and the satisfaction of the patient depends on selecting only those people for surgery who are going to benefit. This skill

requires an understanding of human nature as well as of eye diseases. Some patients attribute all their misfortunes in life, social, sexual and professional, to having to wear glasses and are inordinately upset when their world is not revolutionised after the glasses become redundant.

Research is well advanced into using the laser to provide older people with bifocal corneas. This is not yet available but Mr Grindle confidently predicts that the time is not far off when it may be possible to dispense with half moons.

Funding squeeze angers academics

Universities may cut student intake as cash runs out

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

UNIVERSITIES are threatening to admit more foreign students and turn away British undergraduates this year in protest at a government funding squeeze.

A growing number of vice-chancellors are rallying behind a plan that would lead them to clash with ministers and end an era of growth, which has seen university places increase by 50 per cent since 1989. A few favour the more radical alternative of charging all students direct "top-up" fees, depending on the cost of their course.

Both moves will be debated at an emergency meeting of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals on February 2. The Budget imposed a cut in funding of 7 per cent in real terms in the next academic year, after a 25 per cent reduction over the past five years. Capital funding was cut by 31 per cent from £350 million to £243 million as the Treasury found extra money for schools.

John Bull, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Plymouth, said: "If there is no more money from the public purse I would prefer to explore ways

in which there could be a deal with the custodians of the public purse to agree there will be fewer students for that money."

Universities are free to charge a market rate for non-European Community students, who pay for themselves or are funded by their Government. Annual course fees for British students are fixed by the Government at £750 for classroom-based subjects, £1,600 for laboratory or workshop-based courses and £2,800 for clinical courses. The committee estimates the true cost of these courses as £6,000, £8,000 and £14,500 respectively.

A committee spokesman said: "Vice-chancellors are incensed. They realise they cannot go on any longer providing high-quality higher education for the amount of money the Government provides." Universities are now preparing bids to the Higher Education Funding Council to cut numbers of British undergraduates. They can only do so with funding council approval but were helped when, immediately after the Budget, the council said it

would accept applications for a cut of 3,000 students. The deadline is February 9.

Graeme Davies, principal of Glasgow University and former chief executive of the funding council, said: "Universities can raise more money or recruit fewer students and these are the two alternatives we have in mind. We can seek top-up fees or to take more high-resource students from abroad."

James Wright, Vice-Chancellor at Newcastle, said: "I think the key issue we are down to is that we need to make students pay for all of their maintenance and maybe an additional fee. But it has got to be with a decent loans scheme, not the mess we have at the moment."

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats are preparing to ditch their traditional support for student grants to cover the cost of living, in exchange for a commitment to revive the expansion of higher education. The Liberal Democrats said students would be required to make a contribution to the costs of their education.

Education, page 29



Stephen Barlow, the new artistic director of Opera Northern Ireland, with his wife Joanna Lumley in Belfast yesterday

Artistic director will take opera to the people

THE conductor Stephen Barlow has been appointed artistic director of Opera Northern Ireland. It was announced yesterday, the tenth birthday of the company. As part of a strategy to bring opera closer to the people, Opera Northern Ireland is to develop community projects to appoint a full-time officer to take opera into the schools to

do more touring, north and south of the border and to encourage backing from business people. Barlow said yesterday: "Opera is perceived as being out of reach of many people. It is financially and intellectually. I see it as a huge challenge to change this. It will take time, but I'm confident Opera Northern Ireland has the strategy to do it."

Barlow, who has worked with the main opera houses and orchestras in this country, and also abroad, is the founder of the company Opera 80, now known as the Pacific Touring Opera. In 1994 he conducted Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* for Opera Northern Ireland, and last year led a gala concert in Belfast featuring the soprano Lesley Garrett.

Tests fail to explain jet's roll mystery

Hopes that a sudden and unexplained roll in a British Airways Boeing 737 could hold the key to at least two fatal crashes of similar aircraft have been dashed by air accident investigators.

The pilot of the jet was so concerned when it went into a series of violent movements during a flight test that he declared an emergency and called "mayday." Although the rolls and yaws went on for seven minutes the crew landed the jet safely at Gatwick.

Exhaustive attempts were made to re-create the problem in flight, but it did not recur and no reason has been found. The aircraft remains grounded, almost three months later, and a full investigation is continuing. Investigators say, however, there were significant differences between the incident at 10,000ft over Bournemouth and two crashes in America in 1991 and 1994 when 737s yawed and rolled and plunged out of control.

New horizon

Samantha Brewster, 28, has restarted her 27,000-mile "wrong way" round-the-world solo sailing voyage from Brazil. She is heading for the Southern Ocean after mast failure halted the trip a month ago. The new start-finish line, a 125ft rock off the Brazilian port of Santos, has been designated by the World Sailing Speed Records Council.

Heroin seized

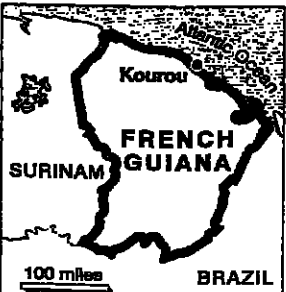
Heroin with a street value of £1.75 million was found on a cargo ship at an east coast port yesterday. Police said the 21kg were hidden in a gas bottle on a ship loaded with phosphates that arrived in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. All 13 crew of the *MY Craigmore*, which came from Pakistan, via Morocco and Portugal, are being questioned.

Vet left £1m

The man who was the model for the character Siegfried Farnon in the James Herriot vet books left an estate worth £1.15 million net. Donald Sinclair, of Thirby, North Yorkshire, who was played by Robert Hardy in the television series, died aged 84 last June. He was a vet and partner of Alf Wight, who wrote under the name of Herriot.

Ariane launch set

The European Space Agency has successfully tested the supercooled engines of the new Ariane space rocket. The launch is due in the summer from Kourou in French Guiana. The Ariane booster will first be used to launch the "cluster" mission — a flotilla of four spacecraft which will study the Earth's magnetic field.



Miniature motor is a giant leap for technology

By NICK NUTTALL

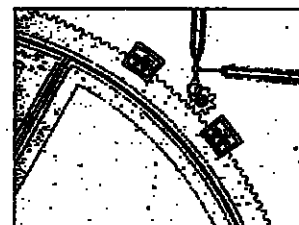
SCIENTISTS in America have developed an engine the size of a grain of pollen, making possible a lilliputian world of midjet machines.

The engine, developed in New Mexico, is said to be simple enough to be mass-produced but complex enough to be useful. Manufacture opens the possibility to such science-fiction-like creations as a tiny robot capable of navigating the human body to clear cholesterol or repairing torn ligaments or nerves. Other hoped-for "nanotechnology" gadgets include man-made insects that are able to buzz around the garden killing real pests and ones that work in the house cleaning dust from floors.

Micro-motors could also be used for low-cost gyroscopes which could have a big impact on the design of cars and military systems, offering highly accurate guidance. Jeff Sniegowski, of the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, one of the scientists involved, said yesterday: "We believe we are the first to demonstrate a really good micro-motor that can connect up with a variety of devices."

"Our idea was to develop a generic micro-motor that has a gear output, so people see there's a power source they can hook up an application to."

Neil Singer, also of the laboratories, said one of the



The tiny silicon motor

first applications might be for internal drug pumps in which the micro-motor could release tiny amounts of drugs or hormones directly into an organ or the patient's bloodstream.

The motor, which is a millimetre square, has been made from silicon and, like mass-produced microchips used in computers, can be etched with acid or light. It is made of gears, the smallest of which is the diameter of a human hair and can spin at 200,000 revolutions a minute. The gears are connected to drive shafts, as in a conventional engine, and are powerful enough to turn other gears up to 30 times bigger. The motor can develop 0.5 microwatts of electricity.

The team hopes to combine the motor with an electronic chip circuit to give it computer intelligence. At present the device is run on electricity but scientists are trying to power the motor by using the temperature changes that occur when water droplets evaporate off the gears and drive shafts.



Chilli Bouchier in the 1936 film *Gypsy*, left. The cover picture of her book, right, was too daring for 1931

Getty's birthday gift helps silent star shine

BRITAIN'S first screen sex symbol is publishing her autobiography at the age of 86, thanks to a birthday gift from the tycoon John Paul Getty Jr.

Chilli Bouchier, who appeared in 13 silent films and 45 talkies, used a £5,000 cheque from Getty, a film enthusiast and most of her life savings to produce *Shooting Star*, which will be issued next month to mark the centenary of the cinema. "Publishers were doubtful about the cost because I wanted a lot of photographs, so I thought, to hell with it, I'll publish it myself," she

said. The cover shows the young Chilli revealing her breasts, a pose from the film *Carnival*. The picture is modest by today's standards but in 1931 many newspapers considered it too daring for publication.

Chilli hopes that Mohamed Al Fayed will offer her a launch party at Harrods, where as chairman he welcomed her on her 80th birthday, 64 years after she was fired as the store's model. At 16, she was seduced by one of its floorwalkers. She then saw an advertisement which said: "We make film stars: price three guineas."

Drive to save violet click beetle

By NICK NUTTALL

WILDLIFE conservationists are to spend £15,000 planting 300 trees in Hereford and Worcester to save a rare and secretive jumping insect.

The violet click beetle is found at only two sites in

ment's advisory body, said yesterday: "It is so rare we know little about its lifestyle and the adult has only been seen five or six times. But it seems to live in a soup-like mixture where birds have nested, squirrels have died and fungus grows in hollow

chalk grassland. The hill also has hawthorn, which provides nectar and a mating site for beetles in the spring.

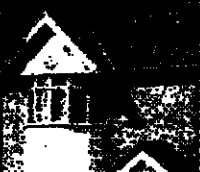
But planting last took place 200 years ago at the 380-acre site and many oaks were felled in the Second World War for timber and fuel. English Na-

tional Trust, which manages the site, is now planning to plant 300 trees to create a new habitat for the beetle.

The violet click beetle is found at only two sites in

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مركز امان الاصل

Parties wield statistical weapons in economic battle

Under Tony Blair, new Labour has been challenging the Tories' reputation for economic stewardship. Janet Bush says that the case can be argued two ways

The Government and Labour have locked horns on what both believe will be the critical battleground of the election campaign: the economy. The chosen weapons are statistics, marshalled by both sides in recent days in full-page newspaper advertisements.

In *The Sunday Times*, John Major asked "Which Country?" was, for example, Europe's largest exporter of televisions and computers, or had the lowest tax burden of any major European country. After a list of 14 glowing economic facts, he answered himself in suitably patriotic terms: "Our Country".

Labour pounced, reusing the advertisement originally placed in this newspaper last November that formed the basis of its pre-Budget assault on the Government. In yesterday's *Independent*, it published part of a table showing that Britain had slipped from 13th place in 1979 to 18th place now in the world prosperity

league. Both combatants are eager to campaign on the economy, perhaps with an eye to Bill Clinton's election-winning slogan in his 1992 campaign for the US presidency: "It's the economy, stupid." Each side is confident that this is winning territory.

This marks another key change to Labour's tactics under Tony Blair. Privately, both Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, were disappointed by the approach adopted by Mr Brown's predecessor, John Smith, during the 1992 general election campaign of concentrating on traditional Labour issues such as health and education and trying to neutralise the economy as an issue. Three-and-a-half years on, Labour is oozing confidence that it can compete with the Tories on their long-held reputation of being the most trusted stewards of the economy.

But Conservative Central Office appears unfazed, pro-

WORLD PROSPERITY LEAGUE	
14	Netherlands
15	Australia
16	Hong Kong
17	Singapore
18	United Kingdom
19	Sweden
20	New Zealand

WHICH COUNTRY
HAS SLIPPED FROM 13TH TO 18TH IN THE
WORLD PROSPERITY LEAGUE
OUR COUNTRY.

Adverts placed by Labour, left, and the Tories argue their economic case

feeling itself delighted that Labour has been drawn on to the one subject on which it feels it can conceivably win the election. President Clinton has moved on to foreign policy as a potential second-term winner. However, the risks for John Major of campaigning on peace in Bosnia or Northern Ireland are too great to contemplate. So the

battle of the statistics has only just begun. Statistics being as flexible a tool as they are — for every positive figure, there is an equally compelling negative qualification, for every negative, there is a positive way of looking at it — there is considerable ammunition for both sides. Labour won the first round

with its prosperity league table at the beginning of November. It took care to use impeccable sources, quoting directly from figures provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the very group that government ministers have cited recently to laud Britain's economic miracle since 1979. Unfortunately for Angela

Knight, the Treasury Minister who dismissed the figures as nonsense the morning after they appeared, they had been reproduced in Michael Heseltine's own paper on competitiveness in May. The startled Deputy Prime Minister was forced to admit on the BBC at lunchtime that the figures were, unfortunately, correct.

The only liberty that Labour took with the OECD's figures was to include Singapore and Hong Kong — neither of which are in the OECD — above Britain in the rankings. This demoted the UK to 18th rather than 16th place. However, this adjustment was made after consultation with the International Monetary Fund and was given credibility by the annual competitiveness scoreboard published by the World Economic Forum, an influential Swiss group. Its table placed the two Far Eastern powerhouses in second and third places respectively on its table of 48 countries. In this version of the statistical truth, Britain also came 18th.

The Treasury has understandably been rather dismayed about Mr Heseltine's championing of annual competitive reports because they tell a rather negative story.

When Central Office produced its own advertisement on Sunday, it ignored the whole issue, focusing instead on its own pot-pourri of positive statistics. All 14 items are as true as Labour's offering is impeccably sourced. But interpretation is the name of the game in economics.

It is true that Britain had the lowest unemployment rate of any major European country in 1995 — but only if you accord "major" status solely to Germany, France and Italy. If other economies are included, British unemployment is higher than that of The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and Austria.

It is correct that Britain is enjoying the longest period with low inflation for the past 50 years. But compare its record with the two "major" European economies, and Britain has had higher average inflation over the past half-century than both Germany and France.

For their part, the Conservatives dismissed Labour's assault on competitiveness grounds as cheap rubbishing of their achievements. The OECD may say that Britain has fallen behind, but there is

plenty the Government can shout about which statistics may not reflect its determination not to allow the social chapter of the minimum wage to destroy jobs; its successful assault on trade union power; its ability to attract foreign companies to Britain; the efficiency gains of privatisation.

For all that new Labour has dared to fight on the economy, the battle-lines are still quite traditional. Labour, with its accent on industry, investment and trading performance, has chosen competitiveness as its standard. The Conservatives are appealing to consumers, talking about low interest rates and low taxes. They had been planning their advertisement for some time but were afraid that its upbeat tone would provoke derisive laughter in a distinctly feel-bad electorate — until now.

Whether these statistical blasts and counter-blasts become the stuff of bar-room debate or are dismissed as "lies, damn lies and statistics" is a question the spin doctors will have to answer in due course.

Leading article, page 15

THE WORLD'S GREATEST

SALE

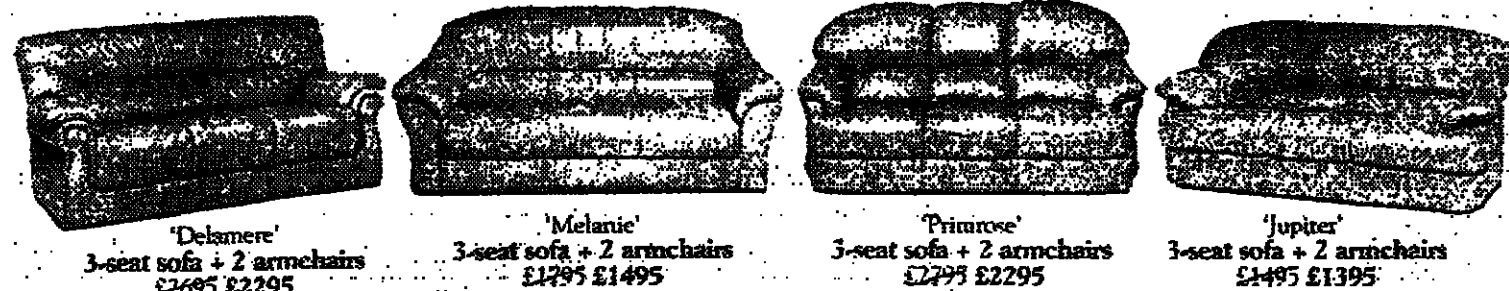


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3-SEAT SOFA + 2-SEAT SOFA WAS £1295 NOW £1195



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Birmingham Edgbaston Shopping Centre, Hagley Road, Leicestershire Grove Farm Triangle, Or, Sainsbury's, Opp. Fosse Park
Northampton Bridge Street
Nottingham Huntingdon Street
Wolverhampton Stafford Street

YORKSHIRE
Leeds Almside Centre, Whitehall Road, Bathurst Road, Parkgate

NORTH EAST
Gateshead Retail World, Team Valley

NORTH WEST
Chester The Greyhound Park, Sealand Road
Liverpool 450 Edge Lane, (1 ml. from M62)
Manchester 96 Cheetham Hill Road

SCOTLAND
Glasgow Great Western Retail Park, Great Western Road



Handle chicken with care to cut poisoning risk

WEEKEND SHOPPING

A REPORT in *Which?* claiming that many Class A chickens are so poorly gutted that they pose a health risk emphasises the importance of choosing chickens carefully and handling them hygienically at home.

Avoid chickens that show signs of bruising, thick skin or unplucked feathers. When unwrapping, check the body cavity for cleanliness, and wash your hands before handling other food or kitchen equipment. Keep the bird out of contact with other food and ensure that it is cooked thoroughly by following the guidelines on the packaging. Good hygiene at home should eliminate the risk of food poisoning.

If you wish to turn to fish as an alternative, though, the week's best buy is herrings, which are plump and full of flavour at present, and low in price at 90p a pound. They are delicious grilled with a little lemon and olive oil, or dipped in oatmeal and shallow fried. Advertised supermarket promotions include:

Asda: fresh diced turkey thigh £2.18 a kg, fresh pork spare rib £2.39 a kg, fresh lamb shoulder £3.05 a kg, green seedless

grapes £1.39 a lb, cherry tomatoes 79p a punnet. Badgers: fresh 2.3kg chicken £3.39, broccoli 75p for 500g, traditionally made crumpets 23p for six.

Harrods: whole Scottish kippers £7.25 for 3.2kg box, sliced smoked salmon £18 for three 227g packets, freshly cooked lobsters £30 for four, beef biltong sticks £2.25 for 100g. Iceland: lower fat breaded cod £1.99 for 575g, boned kippers £1.49 for 680g, boneless chicken breast £3.99 for 900g, turkey breast fillets £2.99 for 700g, treacle tart 99p for 320g. Marks & Spencer: chicken breast fillets in breadcrumb £4.99 for 750g, oak smoked salmon £2.49 for 100g, frozen at sea cod in crumb £2.99 for 600g, apple tart £1.69 for 510g. Morrison's: fresh braising steak £4.38 a kg, fresh shoulder of lamb £2.97 a kg, crumpets 39p for 12, Golden Delicious apples 29p a lb. Safeway: braising steak £3.69 a kg, chicken fillets £3.99 for 900g, brisket of beef £3.99 a kg, white baps 63p for 12, red peppers 80p a lb, Granny Smith apples 38p a lb, courgettes 99p a lb, blue stilton £2.59 a lb.

Sainsbury's: large frozen chicken £1.85 each, minced beef and onion pies 79p for 400g, fish fingers £1.89 for 1.5kg, home grown potatoes 69p for 2.5kg, Conference pears 99p for 1.25 kg, Royal Gala apples £1.19 for 12, diet yoghurts £1.99 for 12. Somerfield: British pork belly rashers £2.17 a kg, Class A chickens £1.74 a kg, gammon steaks £1.09 for two, minced beef and onion pie 39p. Tesco: beef brisket slow roast £4.18 a kg, rump steak £7.38 a kg, boneless shoulder of pork £2.39 a kg, fresh whole roast chicken £3 a kg, Conference pears 39p a lb, baby sweetcorn £1.29 for 200g, crumpets 39p for ten. Waitrose: Scottish roasting beef £2.49 lb, Aberdeen Angus roasting beef £2.99 a lb, farmhouse sausage £1.39 for 450g, frozen North Atlantic prawns £3.89 for 400g, chilled raspberry trifle £1.25 for 397g, dairy vanilla ice-cream £2.19 for 2 litres.

ROBIN YOUNG

Dealers alerted to Nelson theft

By A Staff Reporter

POLICE hope to trace the stolen diaries of Nelson's master gunner by circulating details to antique dealers all over Britain. The three volumes, written nearly 200 years ago, are believed to be worth tens of thousands of pounds.

They were taken a week ago in a raid on a Tyneside house but detectives believe that the burglars do not realise the true worth of the documents and may throw them away. Officers from Northumbria Police are circulating information to antique and art dealers across the country.

A national network of antiquarian booksellers has alerted its members to the theft. The handwritten notes, which

contain details of Nelson's battle plans and documentation on his fleet's weapons, were stolen from Gordon Scullard, 61, of Whickham, Gateshead, a descendant of a South Shields mariner who served with Nelson.

The thieves took antique furniture including a locked bureau in which the diaries were kept, Mr Scullard said. "They are unique. No one knew we had them here," John Graves, of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, said they were irreplaceable and Nelson memorabilia was likely to attract great interest from dealers before the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005.

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South Africa row over 'bugging' of police chiefs

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

A ROW broke in South Africa yesterday over the bugging of senior police officers that has drawn in the National Intelligence Agency and Thabo Mbeki, the First Deputy President.

The police service and I remain mystified as to who is behind this surveillance and why it was or is being done," said George Fivas, the national police commissioner, in a statement. "Other provincial commissioners have also reported various forms of surveillance," he added.

"All our efforts are supposed to be concentrated on fighting threats to South Africa's security — not each other."

The commissioner went on: "Former hit-squad commander Dirk Coetzee stated to a police officer ... that he was tasked by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to spy on me and other members of the police top structure." This was denied by the agency, which

said Mr Coetzee, an apartheid-era security policeman who defected to the African National Congress, "has never received instructions by the NIA to this effect."

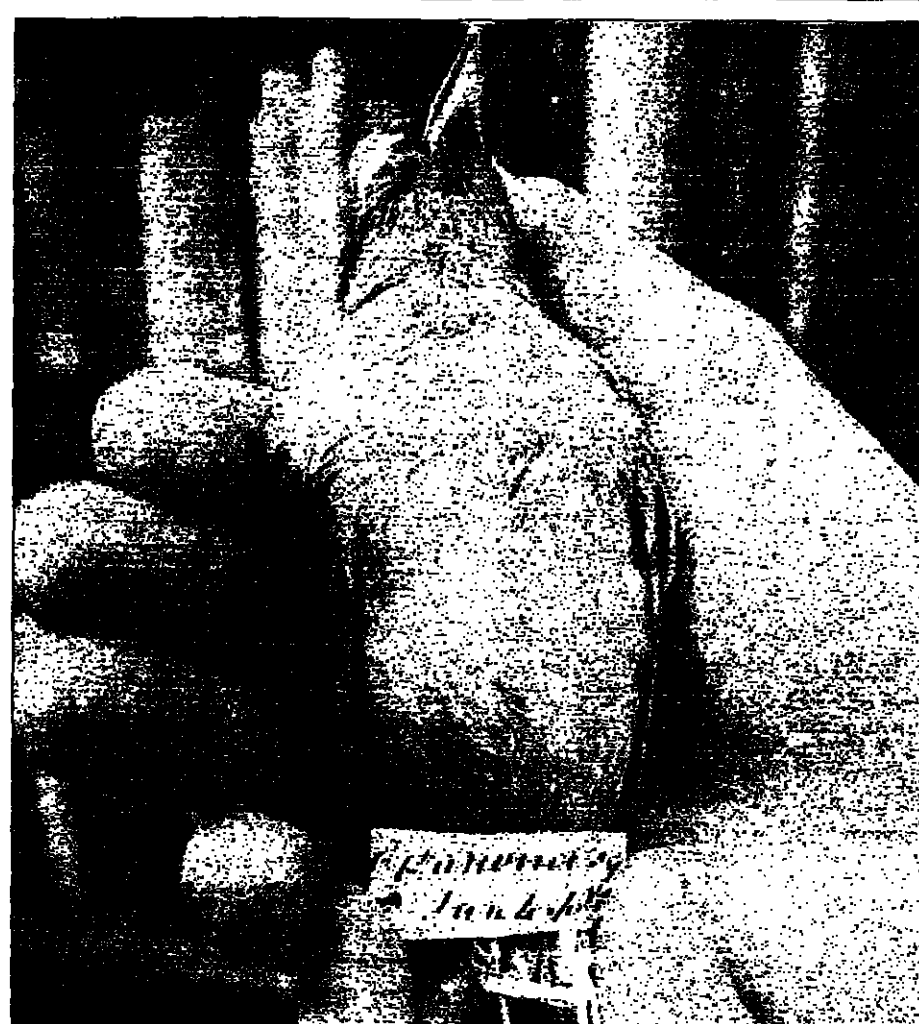
"We therefore reject any insinuations to this effect as nothing more than mischief-making." It claimed Mr Coetzee fled the country before South Africa's elections in 1994, won by the ANC, and gave details of murders and other covert activities he said had been carried out by himself and colleagues. Mr Mbeki said the reports of spying were "disturbing", and he had convened a meeting of relevant Cabinet ministers and heads of security agencies next week to discuss the issue.

The ANC said the reports, first published yesterday morning by *The Star* newspaper in Johannesburg, appeared to be aimed at sowing divisions between security agencies. "The NIA and the

police remain committed to the same objective, the defence of our democracy ... the allegations can only be interpreted as an attempt to create a rift of mistrust between these two important services and thereby bring the integrity of both into question," the ANC said.

Both the ANC and the opposition National Party of F.W. de Klerk, the Second Deputy President, called for an inquiry into the reports.

Later this month the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up by the Government of national unity and chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, is to begin hearings into human rights crimes carried out during the apartheid era. It is suspected that the surveillance of senior officers in the police force, which has been totally restructured, could be linked to parties involved in such activities trying to cover their tracks.



Tagged by Darwin: a finch found in a wooden crate at a Melbourne museum

Darwin's bird in the hand

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

ACHANCE find in the vaults of the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne was hailed yesterday as a priceless discovery and a coup for Australian science.

Two preserved birds — a finch and a tapaculo, or hush bird — were uncovered in a wooden crate. Both were almost certainly tagged and preserved by Charles Darwin on his voyage around South America in the 1830s during his quest to prove the theory of evolution.

The two specimens even carried a label in Darwin's handwriting stating: "C. Darwin Esq., 4 Jan 1837."

The museum's curator of ornithology, Dr Les Christidis, said: "It's quite a coup for Australia." The pair of birds were "priceless", he added.

"Any material by Charles Darwin is pretty special, but to actually find them in an Australian museum is totally unexpected," Dr Christidis said. "You just couldn't put a value on it."

Questions for Briton over arms

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

A BRITISH pilot and five other crew members of a cargo plane that allegedly dropped weapons by parachute over a rural area of eastern India are being questioned by Indian intelligence agencies in prison in Calcutta.

The men have been remanded in custody until Monday. British intelligence officials have been asked for information about the background of the pilot, Peter Bleach, who lives in a farmhouse in North Yorkshire.

He was arrested with the Latvian crew members of an AN26 aircraft that allegedly dropped rocket-propelled grenade launchers and at least 300 Kalashnikov rifles last month on to the village of Purulia in West Bengal.

K. Padmanabhaiah, the Indian Home Secretary, has reviewed investigations into the case, which government officials describe as an "international conspiracy". The authorities are searching for an Indian known as Randy who was supposedly the contact man in India for the arms deliveries.

NEWS BRIEF

Charity's assets 'held' by Rwanda

Nairobi: Rwanda denied yesterday that its troops stole vehicles and equipment from Medecins sans Frontieres, the French-based medical charity. A government spokesman said it was "temporarily holding" property of non-governmental organisations expelled last month to stop aid agency staff stealing it.

But the charity accused the Rwandan Army of stealing the equipment, worth more than £323,000. It was one of 38 foreign agencies, helping Rwanda to rebuild, ordered out last month. (Reuters)

Somali battle

Mogadishu: At least 12 people were killed and dozens wounded when Somali clan fighters attacked forces loyal to General Muhammad Farrah Aidid, the warlord, in the town of Baidoa. (Reuters)

Ransom call

San Jose: The Costa Rican Government fears for the safety of two women, a German tourist and a Swiss resident, abducted from a resort. The kidnappers have demanded a £645,000 ransom. (AFP)

Alcohol find

New York: Tests on alcohol found in the captain's body recovered three days after last month's jet crash in Colombia should determine if it was consumed or resulted from a chemical reaction. (Reuters)

Chechen blast

Moscow: Separatists in Chechnya blew up a Russian armoured carrier near a military checkpoint, killing a Russian soldier. A shootout followed the blast near Grozny, the capital. Tass said. (Reuters)

Vintage brain

Frankfurt: Josef Jacobs, a wine expert, declared himself the world's oldest student after completing a university doctorate just before his 100th birthday. His thesis is on the Rhine in literature. (AFP)

US warned by Peking on visa for Taiwanese

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINA last night cautioned America against issuing a visa to Li Yuan-zu, the Taiwanese Vice-President, or to interfere in its interpretation of human rights.

In an apparent effort to forestall another Sino-American clash over Taiwan, Peking pointedly reminded the US that it should act in accordance with the three joint communiqués both countries have signed. These state that there is only one China, the People's Republic of China.

The reminder came in the wake of Taiwan's application to Washington for a transit visa for its Vice-President to stop briefly on his way to attend the inauguration of the President of Guatemala. The unofficial visit of Lee Teng-hui, the Taiwanese President, to his alma mater, Cornell University, last June caused a sharp downturn in Peking's relations with Washington that have only recently begun to recover.

In Washington, the State Department confirmed that it was considering Taiwan's latest request for a visa.

Chen Jian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said yesterday when asked about the request that China opposed the island's attempt for independence. Commenting on Senegal's decision to establish relations with Taiwan, Mr Chen said China had severed relations with the West African state because it had betrayed its agreement to recognise Peking as the sole legitimate representative of China when the two sides established ties in 1971.

Taiwan said it had resumed ties with Senegal, bringing to 31 the number of countries recognising the island instead of mainland China.

□ Riffkind trip: China voiced hopes that the visit next week of Malcolm Riffkind, the Foreign Secretary, would add impetus to the recent improvement in ties, especially over Hong Kong. (AFP)

Bernard Levin, page 14

America offers \$2m for Burma drug rebel

FROM REUTERS IN BANGKOK

THE United States has offered a \$2 million (£1.3 million) reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Khun Sa, the Burmese opium warlord, who is widely believed to have reached a peace deal with the Government in Rangoon.

The rebel leader has been indicted in the United States on drug trafficking charges.

An American embassy official said yesterday: "In an effort to bring Khun Sa to justice, the United States Government has authorised a reward of up to \$2 million for information leading to his arrest and conviction."

Former guerrilla colleagues say that Khun Sa is now in his jungle headquarters under the protection of Burmese troops, who arrived without resistance on Monday.

The official said: "We consider it the duty of the Bur-

mese authorities to bring Khun Sa to justice and the Burmese Government has consistently stated that they consider Khun Sa a criminal."

Former guerrilla colleagues speculate that Khun Sa has agreed to give up his war and strongholds in exchange for some sort of amnesty for his troops, and possibly for himself. But a Burmese government official said yesterday there was no question of Khun Sa avoiding the law.

Khun Sa denies being a heroin producer or trafficker and says he merely taxed opium traders travelling through his zone of control in the northeast Burmese state of Shan.

Singapore: Ten members of an international drugs trafficking syndicate have been arrested here, a Central Narcotics Bureau spokesman said yesterday. (Reuters)

COMPLAIN TO US ABOUT YOUR CAR
AND SEE WHAT YOU GET...



Political outrage as Tories defend 'balancing act' between free speech and trade

Saudi dissident to fight deportation in High Court

By Emma Wilkins

A SAUDI dissident who faces deportation to the Caribbean island of Dominica said yesterday that he would take his fight to remain in Britain to the High Court.

Dr Muhammad al-Masari condemned the Home Office's decision to refuse his claim for asylum in Britain. "It's a shrewd trick but not very dignified. It's a ploy that a country which has traditions of democracy going back to Magna Carta is slowly giving away all those standards of dignity and character," Dr Masari said at a Commons news conference.

"Of course, this is an attempt to silence me but I intend to stay here and fight in a dignified way. We will continue to fight for our country from here, God forbid from Dominica, or from the Moon if necessary," he added.

The deportation order came after pressure on the British Government from the Saudi regime, the US Administration and British arms companies. Saudi Arabia bought £1.5 billion of British goods in 1994 and the Al-Yamamah arms contract, signed in 1985, secures thousands of long-term British jobs.

Dr Masari described his reaction when a letter came from the Home Office giving him ten days to appeal or leave the country. "When I

received the paper it was shocking, because I would have expected some substantive explanation of the issues involved. I would have thought it would have taken several years to sort all this out," he said.

Dr Masari applied for political asylum in Britain in April 1994, after escaping from Saudi Arabia via Yemen. A government attempt to deport him to Yemen was blocked by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal on the ground that his life would be in danger.

Dr Masari left his job as a professor of physics at King Fahd University, Riyadh, in 1993 to set up the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia. The organisation, which attacked corruption within the regime, was outlawed and Dr Masari was arrested, imprisoned and allegedly tortured for six months.

"My home was raided and they took me away to prison. They beat me with bamboo sticks and spat in my face. I did not fear for my life while I was in jail, but I am sure now that if I went back I would be executed," he said. Dr Masari, 49, said he believed Dominica was a pleasant country, but he had no desire to live there.

He criticised Ann Widdecombe, a Home Office Minister, for suggesting that if he

did not like Dominica he could go to a "fundamentalist" Muslim country. Mrs Widdecombe defended the Home Office decision and said she had a balancing act to maintain between Dr Masari's freedom of speech and thousands of British jobs.

Lord Avebury, the Liberal Democrat peer and chairman of the parliamentary human rights group, said the attempt to deport Dr Masari was unlawful. "It's quite clear that this decision was taken on purely commercial grounds. If the UK is willing to give in to blackmail from a powerful state like Saudi Arabia, then what is to prevent other countries attempting similar things?"

Tony Banks, Labour MP for Newham North West, said: "This is us being completely pressurised by the Saudis... Damn his civil rights — business is more important, particularly business with a very nasty and unpleasant regime."

Ken Livingstone, the Labour MP whose Brent East constituency includes Dr Masari's Willesden home, said: "What you have is the British Government being prepared to sacrifice someone's interests in order to suck up to the Saudis." Dr Kalim Siddiqui, leader of the self-styled Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, said the move was an attempt to appease Saudi Arabia. He promised to continue Dr Masari's work if the appeal failed.

Sir Ivan Lawrence, Tory chairman of the Commons Home Affairs Committee, said: "We have to strike a balance. Most people would say that if foreigners want to come to this country they are very welcome, but they can't use this country as a base for causing a great deal of ill-feeling to friends. We cannot allow our friends to be insulted by somebody who has come here simply to make mischief."



Muhammad al-Masari, the campaigner against the Saudi Royal Family who is to be expelled from Britain under the new hardline policy of Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, leaves his north London headquarters yesterday for a Commons press conference

Britain shuts door on fundamentalists

MICHAEL HOWARD'S order for the expulsion of Muhammad al-Masari, the Saudi Islamic dissident, marks a watershed in British policy. It also sends a signal to a large number of Muslim exiles in London: the Government will not allow Britain to become a haven for Islamic fundamentalists.

The Home Secretary made the move because the dissidents' activities were in danger of jeopardising thousands of British jobs. On a visit to Saudi Arabia in November, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, was berated over Dr Masari's activities in London, and British businessmen expressed fears that export orders were being lost as a result.

For the past two years, the Government has been increasingly vexed by the influx of dissidents from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Most are virulent opponents of their governments, and have either escaped from prison, are under sentence or face arrest if they return. Once in Britain, many have applied for asylum, and while awaiting a decision have used the network



Michael Binyon, Diplomatic Editor, assesses the Home Secretary's action in enforcing a "not welcome" rule against leading Islamic militants who are campaigning from their exile in London

of Arab newspapers, radio stations and political contacts to campaign against their governments.

The dissidents' calls for an Islamic state envisage a return to a puritanical enforcement of Sharia (Islamic law) with its provision for draconian punishments for theft and adultery, the scrapping of pluralist democracy and enforced seclusion of women.

Middle East governments have been outraged. Most consider themselves friendly to Britain and generally pro-Western. They are engaged, to varying degrees, in a political struggle with Islamic activists, who oppose Western influence and political links with America and Europe. They cannot therefore understand why Britain's Conservative Government not only tolerates the radicals' pres-

ence in London, but also maintains that it has no power to curb their political activities here as long as they do not break British law.

Relations with Tunisia have been bedevilled by Britain's granting of asylum to Rashid Ghannouchi, an Islamic activist who heads the banned al-Nahda Islamic party and was convicted by a Tunisian court of responsibility for a bomb blast that blew the foot off a British tourist.

Bahrain was furious that three pro-Iranian Muslim clergy who were expelled after widespread rioting and demonstrations arrived in Britain, having unexpectedly switched their tickets. Within a week Bahrain's Foreign Minister flew to London to persuade the Government not to grant them asylum. Egypt has also

denounced the presence in London of Islamic activists, in particular two prominent opponents of President Mubarak. He gave a warning in November that Britain would pay "a very high price" for granting asylum to Muslim militants.

For Britain, however, the two real challenges have come from Algeria and Saudi Arabia. France has publicly called on Britain to do more to suppress the activities of Algerian militants. Saudi Arabia has recently stepped up pressure on London over dissidents in Britain, shaken by the bomb attack on the headquarters of the National Guard, which killed six people including four Americans.

The barrage of criticism from Arab governments led John Major last year to promise that Britain would take vigorous new unspecified measures against militants. Last night, Arab ambassadors welcomed the move against Dr Masari as the first step in making London a more hostile environment for Islamic activists.

Leading article, page 15

Middle Eastern activists 'funded by exile tycoon'

By Ben Macintyre and Stewart Tendler

A SAUDI ARABIAN millionaire is suspected of channeling thousands of pounds to Islamic militants in London which may have bankrolled French terrorist bombings, according to security sources in Paris and London yesterday.

Scotland Yard anti-terrorist sources said the cash was ostensibly intended for the publication of a fundamentalist newspaper but some of the money is thought to have been passed to the Algerian groups waging a terror campaign across France.

Police suspect the fundamentalists' benefactor is Oussama ibn-Laden, the son of one of the richest families in Saudi Arabia. He has been linked to the French attacks after the arrest of an Algerian now awaiting extradition from Britain to France.

The elusive Saudi tycoon, who lives in Sudan, has provided backing for various fundamentalist groups for more than a decade. He is thought to have acted on behalf of Iranians, Libyans and other Saudi dissidents. Mr ibn-Laden, 40, sent cash to Rachid Ramda, organiser of al-Ansar, a newsletter of the radical Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) published in London. The newspaper is distributed at mosques in Britain and has been reported to the Crown Prosecution Service for racial incitement.

The GIA has claimed responsibility for the recent

bombings in France. The funds began to appear in London about two years ago and increased until they reached \$500 (£320) a month at one point last year.

Mr ibn-Laden has been a target of interest for several Western intelligence agencies since they first confirmed that he had established a base in Khartoum. Sudan's Islamic Government has turned a deaf ear to Western requests for the extradition of wanted men living in the country. French intelligence agents travelled to Khartoum to kidnap the leading terrorist, Carlos the Jackal, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, in August 1994.

Mr Ramda, 26, was arrested in London on Novem-



Carlos: kidnapped by the French in Sudan

ber 4 at the request of Paris and awaits extradition to France. He was remanded in custody at Belmarsh Magistrates' Court, south London, yesterday until March 1.

Described by the French press as the "mastermind" of the attacks, Mr Ramda is alleged to have passed on funds to Islamic terrorist units in France, enabling them to rent flats and purchase bomb materials.

Mr ibn-Laden, 40, who was deprived of his Saudi citizenship in 1993, has been linked with numerous radical Islamic groups in the past. His family's fortune was amassed by building mosques. In the early 1980s, Mr ibn-Laden provided support for Mujahidin guerrillas fighting Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

According to French newspaper reports yesterday, young Algerian volunteers keen to join the Afghan guerrillas had their passage paid by the man known as the "jihad's banker". Mr ibn-Laden was in the Afghan refugee camps at Peshawar, on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the early 1980s where he allegedly made contact with the Iran-backed Hezbollah extremist group.

After the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, many of the Algerian volunteers collectively known as "The Afghans" returned to Algeria where they formed a militant

Israelis to free Hamas militants

FROM REUTERS IN GAZA

ISRAELI agreed yesterday to free jailed members of Hamas, the Islamic militant group which opposes Israeli-PLO peace moves, before the Palestinian elections on January 20, a Palestinian negotiator said.

Nabil Shaath, a former member of the self-rule Palestinian Authority who is negotiating the release of prisoners, said after meeting David Libai, the Israeli Justice Minister, on the Israeli-Gaza border, that Israel would free more than 1,200 inmates soon. Those released would include Hamas members.

Israel freed some Hamas prisoners after it signed its first peace deal with the PLO in 1993, but has excluded members of the group from subsequent releases since Hamas and Islamic Jihad killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings.

Meanwhile, Bassam Eid, a Palestinian member of the B'tselem Israeli human rights group who was jailed for 24 hours by PLO police, said yesterday that Yasser Arafat's autonomy government was no better than the Israeli regime it replaced. He vowed to continue his activities.

Washington: The United States is investigating whether Israel sold China American technology to build an advanced fighter without Washington's permission, the State Department said. (Reuters)

'Newtron bomb' fall-out changes slang

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IF AN American goes berserk at work it is known as going postal, a term coined from the number of shootings by frustrated workers at US post offices. But keep your anger under control and you could have a high EQ or emotional intelligence.

Stay glued to a computer and you risk becoming a mouse potato. Get divorced young and you will have survived a starter marriage.

Original words and phrases are spewing forth, according to the American Dialect Society, which has just conducted its annual roundup. The most mega-

bytes of new words come from computers, but medical breakthroughs, politics, changing lifestyles and humour all contribute buzzwords to five by.

Armed with their lists, the society's members — some 60 professors of English, philologists and linguists — met in Chicago to pick their Words of the Year that most aptly characterised current discourse and preoccupations.

This year's first place, announced yesterday, was a tie between World Wide Web, the multimedia network, and Newt, as in Newt Gingrich. The House Speaker's first name has appeared in phrases poking fun at him. They include Newtpeak, Newt World Order, Newtron bomb, Newt Boy and Newt kids on the

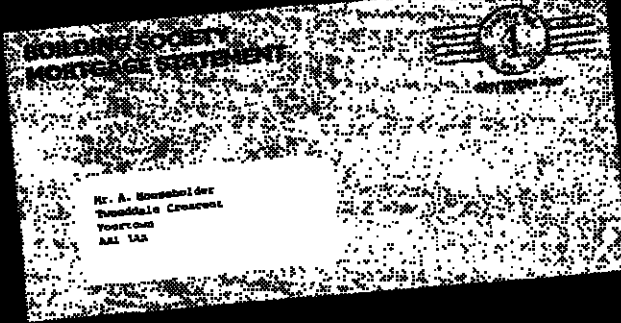
block, describing his devoted followers. EQ was chosen as most useful new phrase, starter marriage as most outrageous and going postal as most original.

That left a lot of runners-up. Among them: smoking bed for sexual misconduct that destroys a political career, nastygram for unwelcome messages on the Internet, and zone out for mindless relaxation. Officials who stick close to President Clinton, especially during photo sessions, are Velcroheads. Gaydar is the ability of homosexuals to spot others.

Every year there are probably 10,000 freshly minted words or phrases worth noting, according to David Barnhart, publisher of The Barnhart Dictionary Companion, a quarterly of new usages.

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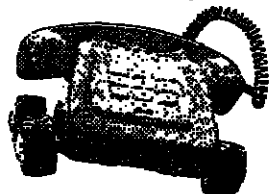
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Arson blamed for restaurant death of top French chef

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE mysterious death last week of Jean Schillinger, one of France's top chefs, renowned for inventing some of the most aromatic sauces in French cuisine, is believed to have involved crime.

Schillinger, 61, president of the Association of French Master Chefs, died when his famous restaurant in Colmar they began to suspect that the death of the *patron* was far from accidental. On Wednesday, the Colmar magistrate classed the case as "arson leading to death".

The chef died of asphyxiation in his flat over the restaurant. He had spent Christmas at another home, but he always stayed in the flat

above his restaurant, alone, on the eve of reopening after a holiday to get an early start in his kitchen. At 5am on the day of the fire, Schillinger was woken by security guards who had been alerted by a burglar alarm in the restaurant. Witnesses said Schillinger twice appeared on the balcony of his flat as the fire spread, then vanished inside.

Neighbours reported hearing the sound of breaking glass just before the fire started and investigators discovered a large stone amid the rubble which police believe was used to break a downstairs window. Jean-Pierre Laffitte, the magistrate in charge of the case, said other "strong and convergent" clues have been discovered. "Foul play is strongly suspected but cannot be established for certain. The sounding of the alarm does not prove the presence of a person in the restaurant; it could have been

set off by the flames or something else," M Laffitte said.

Many stars of French gastronomy attended Schillinger's funeral in Strasbourg Cathedral. Paul Bocuse, the master chef, described him as one of the grand masters.

The police in Colmar said that Schillinger had been the object of bitterness, but M Laffitte refused to say whether he had received any death threats. French cuisine is a competitive business, but Schillinger, a welcoming host famed for his smoked duck liver ravioli and foie gras with truffles, had few known enemies. His colleagues have expressed bafflement that anyone would destroy his restaurant, let alone kill its owner.

Mafia gangs have established protection rackets in other parts of the French restaurant business but Colmar remains a quiet city with little crime.



Jean Schillinger, who was killed by a blaze in his Colmar restaurant, was widely acclaimed for his aromatic sauces

Fit to burst on trail of a four-star hoax to deflate Michelin

FROM KATE MUIR IN PARIS

IT was an unprepossessing four-line entry in the 1996 *Michelin Guide*, but it would change the course of culinary history: "**** Vivarois, 192 Avenue Victor Hugo. Closed August Saturdays and Sundays. Lunch 345 francs. à la carte 400-700 francs. Specialties: fondant of vegetables with olive purée, stuffed and braised squash, turbot with celeriac."

The four tiny stars which accompanied the entry — published in a sneak preview in a French magazine — set the teeth gnashing of Paris's jealous chefs. Vivarois is the first restaurant, not only in Paris, but the universe, to be awarded four Michelin stars. Five restaurants in Paris have three "worth a special journey" stars.

Suddenly, the once "unpretentious" Vivarois, whose previous ratings varied between two and three stars, was thrust into the international limelight.

As an investigative journalist, it seemed sensible to make an immediate reservation for lunch. The chef, Claude Peyrot, they said, would not be able to talk: "He is an artisan. He stays in the kitchen."

Clutching my computer printout on the Great Peyrot, I dived in a taxi and arrived in the restaurant — kitted out with white plastic bucket chairs — that had not changed much since M

Peyrot and his wife Jacqueline opened in 1966. I took hold of a menu, but just as I pondered the "leek mousse with fresh tomato coulis", the waiter snatched it away and announced that the chef would be providing a special tasting.

It began with a minuscule croissant filled with anchovy purée, moved onto a perfect cluster of vegetables in coriander vinaigrette, paused for a delicate slice of roasted red pepper mousse, topped with two raviolis filled with fresh lobster, continued with a truffle cushioned in flaky pastry, and triumphed with a slice of fish in cream sauce, which although delicious, was too much. I refused the cheese board.

As I paused for stomach space, the head waiter approached. "It's not true, you know. It's a hoax." Feeling like a deflated soufflé, I trapped the chef. The hoax was confirmed. Back at the office, I phoned Michelin: "We never ever award anyone four stars and never will," said a spokesman.

The man who started the story was Périco Légasse, food critic of *L'Événement du Jeudi*. "You went there?" he hooted. "It was a joke to give the *Michelin Guide* a good shaking up, since it's got so stuffy. Nice lunch, though."



Oleksy: was very close to former Soviet agent

Polish PM 'was naive' about spy

FROM REUTERS IN WARSAW

JOZEF OLEKSY, the Polish Prime Minister, fighting off allegations that he spied for Moscow, has acknowledged that he made a mistake in keeping close personal contacts with a Russian agent.

But he reiterated that the contacts did not involve spying and that he was innocent. He had earlier accused Poland's secret services of fabricating evidence that he was a former Soviet mole.

"Too intimate a friendship with such an acquaintance is imprudent. I know this today," Mr Oleksy said in a television interview on Wednesday night. "But you cannot put an equals sign between this acquaintance and today's interpretations [by the secret services]."

Mr Oleksy indirectly admitted that his friendship with Vladimir Alganov, a Moscow diplomat and an intelligence officer in Warsaw in 1981-92, was very close. In Moscow, Mr Alganov said on Tuesday the Polish Prime Minister had been "of no interest to the Soviet Union".

Mr Oleksy, a former senior communist official, has accused former President Walesa of using the case for political revenge. Mr Walesa was defeated in the November presidential elections by another former communist, Aleksander Kwasniewski.

Nato and US win Bosnians' release

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

SIXTEEN Bosnian civilians held captive by Bosnian Serb forces were freed yesterday after Nato and the United States put pressure on the Serbs.

The first three to be released yesterday morning said they were beaten with pistols and held in a small bathroom for several days. Thirteen others were later handed over to French Nato troops from the Kula prison near Lukavica.

Their release comes as President Clinton plans to visit US troops in Bosnia in the next two weeks. Washington had protested to President Milosevic of Serbia over the abduction eight days ago of the 16 in Ildza, west of Sarajevo.

Their arrests were an overt violation of the American-

Belgrade: A dog, Dena, walked 300 miles across Croatia for four months and found its owners, the Radanovic family, on New Year's Eve in Serbia. The family fled Petrinja, Croatia, in August. Dena found them in Ruma, near Belgrade. (AFP)

brokered Dayton peace accord and greatly embarrassed Nato, which initially said that it was not its mandate to protect Bosnian civilians encouraged to use roads opened across ethnic areas.

As Muslims refused to venture into Serb territory, the Bosnian Government accused Nato of shirking its responsibility towards civilians. The US State Department demanded the release of those detained and Nato officials conducted talks to secure their freedom.

Yesterday, in what could be the first deliberate attack on Nato troops, an Italian soldier was shot on duty in Vogosca, a Serb-held suburb of Sarajevo due to be returned to government control. Other Nato casualties so far have involved landmines.

Doubts grow in Paris over single currency

BY BEN MACINTYRE

TWO sacred cows of government thinking came under attack this week as prominent figures from both sides of the political spectrum voiced growing doubts about France's ability to meet Maastricht criteria for European currency union and the stability of the Franco-German axis.

The deficit-cutting drive for a single currency and the priority of the German alliance have become twin articles of faith for most of the French elite. By suggesting they may be in danger, commentators are beginning to say the unsayable.

Writing in *Le Nouvel Observateur* magazine this week, Jacques Delors, the former European Commission President, said: "Let us have the courage to recognise that the real danger today is not so much the risk of a Euro-British crisis as that of a Franco-German split."

By oscillating between a

British-style reflex in defence of sovereignty and German federalist ambitions, France "runs the risk of discouraging those German leaders who have... shown their allegiance to a European Germany rather than a German Europe," he added, insisting only a "European federation of nation states" can accommodate the ambitions of France and Germany.

At the same time, in an article in the *International Herald Tribune* yesterday, the Gaullist MP Pierre Lellouche wondered: "Can France... balance its finances, stimulate growth and employment, carry out structural reforms and cut by half the budget deficit, all in the span of three years?"

If currency union is scuppered, he said, "the balance of power between Germany and France would be profoundly transformed, with damaging consequences for the future of Europe."

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Maurice Saatchi finds his voice

For years, the mastermind behind some of the most successful advertising campaigns in history has been avoiding interviews. With some reluctance, he has lifted the veil on his enigmatic personality

IT IS exactly one year to the day since I did not interview Maurice Saatchi. He had just said goodbye to the company bearing his name: a shaken soul, but not shaken enough to dislodge his insistence on never being interviewed or quoted. A year on, we go through the same charade.

There must be no interview (the I-word). I must not root it in time or place. I must not say (he dictates): "Maurice leaned back in his chair and gazed out of the window..." It is hard to tell whether he is being serious, sometimes, as he strikes these poses — an uneasy alliance of arrogance and diffidence. He claims that answering questions will make him break out in a terrible rash. He has evolved this neurosis about being quoted. How does he get away with it? How does he always get away with everything?

Let us look at the facts. A year ago, nobody could foresee what would become of him. David Herro, the Chicago fund-manager who instigated the boardroom coup against Maurice, might have been right. Clients and creative talents might have stayed with the old company. Maurice might have sat in his little office named "Dress Rehearsal" in Davies Street, looking dolefully out of the window through his enormous glasses.

As it turned out, this new year — his fiftieth — starts cheerily. His old friends have proved loyal. The new British Airways campaign was launched yesterday. He finds himself laughing more than for years. As he likes to say: "Saatchi is more than a company. It's an attitude." After the debacle, the Saatchi name (a bloody good name, so bizarre nobody will forget it — Charles Saatchi) is the only unfinished business. A legal battle, when the old company tried to stop M and C from using their own name, was settled last summer.

The brothers agreed not to solicit old clients or staff for six months. Their old company became Cordiant plc, but retained the Saatchi & Saatchi name for subsidiaries. To have two competitors under the Saatchi name is absurd. Maurice has said: "I do take some pride — not boasting, I hope — in reflecting how few British brand names have become famous all over the world. Saatchi is a great brand name."

Saatchi & Saatchi is no longer emblazoned across Berkeley Square. M & C Saatchi inhabit three floors of a building off Wigmore Street, where the style of décor —

pink herringbone tweed wall-covering — is not quite the Saatchi taste. Already they have outgrown it.

The story of the brothers' 17 years of aggrandisement has been often told. By 1986 they handled 5 per cent of the world's advertising. Then they over-reached themselves: they swallowed Ted Bates, then attempted to take over the Midland Bank in a hubristic *folie de grandeur*.

Now, while old Saatchi languishes, the new Saatchi agency has succeeded in regaining British Airways, Dixons, the Mirror Group, Gallaher, Qantas and Pfizer accounts, and taken on several more, including PPP, Sekonda, Alamo Rent-a-Car, Head, Glaxo Wellcome...

So Maurice and his wife, Josephine Hart, still have their three houses: Mayfair,

And he included a recording of Nathan Saatchi — who brought his family from Baghdad in 1947, when Maurice was one — singing in Hebrew at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Malda Vale. This made the old man very happy. (All four sons have "lost their religion".)

Sue Lawley lobbied at Maurice the memorable first line of his wife's first novel: "Damaged people are dangerous. They know they can survive." Was this true of him, she asked? "Yes, I think it's a most brilliant observation."

Lawley's view was that he was now motivated by revenge, like Hamlet. Maurice pointed out that Hamlet's revenge involved losing his own life: "I would hate to think that Hamlet's story was analogous..."

But getting the British Airways account back was, indeed, sweet revenge. Four agencies pitched for the account: the others were old Saatchi & Saatchi (known at M & C Saatchi as "Oldco"), J. Walter Thompson, and Bartle Bogle Hegarty. M & C won it, a campaign worth £100 million over two years. Tim Duffy is the young creative genius behind the first ad. Duffy, ex-Cambridge, explained to me his concept: "British Airways ads have always emphasised scale and size, with crowd scenes and big statements such as 'every year we bring the equivalent of Manhattan across the Atlantic'... But an airline has to communicate its personal, people-related side: customer service and sensitivity. Every moment, 15,000 people are in the air flying British Airways. Each passenger has hopes, dreams, ambitions, and we explore that human angle."

(I try to forget the time in 1986 that we, with hopes, dreams and four small children, were bumped off a British Airways flight on a Bank Holiday for no better reason than that they had routinely overbooked the flight, when someone mentioned this to Lord King on our behalf his response was: "Tough.")

But that was reality, this is advertising. We shall see the new BA commercial this weekend, along with half a billion other people on six continents. It is certainly clever, a very 1990s commercial.

The mysterious alchemy of the advertising world is all to do with romance. This is why the old Saatchi & Saatchi loyalists, and the rising newcomers like Duffy, resigned on principle, and followed Maurice. Herro thought the "ami-



Sussex, the South of France. Christmas passed quietly in Sussex.

People were astonished, last year, when Maurice exposed himself to the scrutiny of *Desert Island Discs*. He had never done a broadcast of any kind before. He agreed to it, at the third time of asking, because Josephine — Irish, voluble, warm, passionate — insisted, on the grounds that it was such an honour.

He now realises why the programme is so magnetic. He thought he could get away with picking records and talking about them, but discovered that he had to explain each choice with a confessional revelation. A certain jazz record had erotic power: his elder brothers would play it when entertaining girls in their rooms. The Bach Double Violin Concerto was his former father-in-law's favourite. *Surabaya Johnny*, the song of unrequited love by Kurt Weill, is what Josephine insists on playing after Sunday lunch.



An unlikely mixture of arrogance and diffidence — Maurice Saatchi claims that an interview can bring him out in a terrible rash

gos" who had been with the brothers since time began — Jeremy Sinclair (creative guru who devised the pregnant man), Bill Muirhead and David Kershaw — would never walk away from their fat-cat accoutrements: pensions, chauffeured cars, and so on. But they did. Sinclair wrote in his resignation letter: "I am not leaving the company. The company has left me."

Maurice is suitably grateful to the amigos, the clients, the young Duffys. The atmosphere at M & C now is very like the old days, everyone talking in shorthand. He is no longer driven by a crazed ambition to be the biggest agency in the world. He will not make that mistake again. "All that we would like to achieve is to be the most sought-after agency in the world." They have offices in New York, Hong Kong, Sydney and Singapore, but the French international agency Publicis operates for them elsewhere.

As a possible election year looms, Maurice has resumed another former account: selling the Tories. At a recent reception at 11 Downing Street, I witnessed him making a bet with the brother-in-law of Alan Howarth: that the Tories would win the next election with an increased majority.

Last weekend, Saatchi launched a message from the Prime Minister in a full-page ad in all the Sunday papers. It coincided, unfortunately, with Emma Nicholson's defection — a foretaste of the agro and panic the coming campaign will doubtless involve. But they do have a master strategy. "It is important not to peak too early," Maurice says, chuckling.

After three years with the Saatchis, writing his book *The Brothers*, Ivan Fallon found Maurice "more shadowy and more complex" than ever. His choice of desert island luxury was a virtual reality headset that would transport him to his Sussex garden. "I would step out onto my terrace, I

would look at the beautiful wall of my house, and marvel at the inspired plantmanship which involved juxtaposing Paul's Himalayan Musk with the fading flowers of the wisteria. I would get into my boat, sail across my lake and arrive at my jetty. Josephine

would get into the boat and would lie down beside me. I would look up at the blue sky of Sussex..."

But then, surely, he would wake up from this adman's dream, alone and sadder than before?

"But it would seem real to

me. Perception is reality," he argues. Virtual reality manufacturers have since inundated him with offers to create his headset.

In last year's non-interview, I said Maurice's most annoying diversionary tactic when asked a question was his

counter-question: "Why don't you wear lipstick?" Afterwards he kindly sent me a very grand lipstick: Paloma Picasso's Mon Rouge. It makes me look like Cruella de Vil. One day I shall smear it on and terrify him into answering some straight questions.

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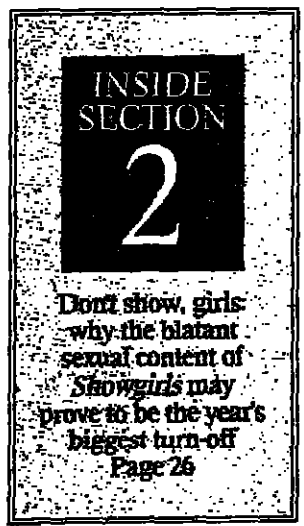
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Whose scalp will Scott take?

Peter Riddell says soundbites are as important as the inquiry

The Scott report on the arms to Iraq affair is the political wild card of the new year. Eighteen months late, the report is finally due to be submitted to Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, within a few weeks. Its impact will depend not just on what it says — in more than 2,000 pages of complicated argument — or upon how vigorous a defence is mounted by the ministers criticised, but upon the snap judgment on what it appears to say.

Allegations about Whitehall misdemeanours seldom interest the public for long. They have little effect on most people's lives, and matter only when they cast doubt on the integrity of ministers or result in resignations. The Westland affair, exactly ten years ago, had a very limited impact on Tory fortunes. Margaret Thatcher worried that she might not survive, but once it was clear that she was safe, the murky details were quickly forgotten.

Much depends on the political mood. The inquiry under Lord Fook into the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982 would have been much more damaging if the outcome had been anything other than a triumph for Margaret Thatcher, but when the report appeared eight months after the conflict, there was no desire for hand-wringing.

The Franks inquiry was a classic example of the importance of what a report appears to say. Much of it was critical of political and intelligence failures which preceded the invasion. Lord Callaghan of Cardiff described this as a "splendid picture, delineating the light and shade". But when Franks reached the final paragraph, 339, "he got fed up with the canvas that he was painting and chucked a bucket of whitewash over it". The key sentence — "we would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present Government" — reads oddly after the previous 338 paragraphs. But it set the tone for the press interpretation.

As Alex Danchev argues in his biography of Franks, "Franks clears Maggie" was the reflex reaction, conditioned by the artful news management of the report's rush release: a tightly restricted distribution of advance copies, a prepared list of the number of key paragraphs, a spate of pre-publication leaks... designed to discount criticism of the Prime Minister herself and implant the idea of a long period of cross-party war guilt."

In the case of Scott, the inquiry's methods have already been fiercely criticised. The political world is divided between those who regard Sir Richard Scott as a brave, crusading judge who has exposed wrongdoing and covered up at the heart of Government, and those who see his inquiry as unfair to civil servants, and naïve about the workings of Whitehall and foreign policy. John Major has said merely that the Government will consider the report's conclusions, carefully making no commitment about accepting them.

The political world is fiercely divided about Scott

gued that they had a duty to sign to protect official documents, allowing judges to decide about release. But Michael Heseltine's reluctance to sign shows that this is a cloudy area, and the report is expected to recommend changes.

Critics argue that certificates are gagging orders on the rights of defendants. This view was reinforced by the Court of Appeal's decision in November to overturn the convictions of four men involved in supplying arms to Iraq, the Ordtech case, on the ground that they had been denied a fair trial because vital documents were withheld by the Government.

Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney-General, advised the ministers to sign and it is likely that he, rather than they, will be the target of criticism. This raises the emotive issue of whether people might have been sent to prison after an unfair trial. Sir Nicholas argues that he acted in good faith on the basis of the best legal opinion at the time. But in the past someone has had to resign, just to clear the air. Lord Carrington and two other ministers quit over the Falklands, and Mr Heseltine and Sir Leon Brittan did over Westland. Sir Nicholas and Mr Waldegrave intend to defend their decisions vigorously. But the former looks more vulnerable as the necessary sacrifice this time. Sir Nicholas's enforced departure would further weaken the Government, but should not of itself be terminal. The last rites could still be some time away.



Great wail of China

When dissidents are being jailed and infants are being slaughtered in squalor, tourists should stay at home

A tiny paragraph — hardly more than a dozen lines — stops the marmalade spoon halfway to the toast. I think I would have missed it altogether, had it not been on the same page as, and near the news of, the latest atrocity to be inflicted upon Wei Jingsheng, and I might as well give it to you in full. Headlined "China predicts rosy tourist future", it went, full of sics, like this:

China expects to draw 250 million tourists from abroad over the next five years: about a 25 per cent increase from the first half of the 1990s, the official China Daily newspaper reported on Monday.

Revenue from tourism is also expected to grow, reaching \$14 billion by the year 2000. The newspaper was quoting He Guangwei, the director of the China National Tourism Administration.

Some 45 million overseas tourists will have visited China by the end of 1995, the report said, and they will have spent \$8 billion.

Mr He said he expected that Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, and Macau's in 1999, to bring in more visitors through those ports.

The first and most obvious thought to arise is that there is no reason to believe anything whatever that He Guangwei says on the subject of tourism to China, or on anything else for that matter. If He Guangwei were told by his bosses to take all his clothes off and dance naked on the roof of the China National Tourism Administration, he would instantly do so. And if the gentleman over there has begun to curl his lip in scorn at my disbelief of the China National Tourism Administration's veracity, I shall ask him if he is old enough to have heard of a man called Stalin. (Just as I was about to pen my next line, I stopped in something like horror; I had realised that there are in our country very many thousands of people — millions, perhaps — who have not heard of Stalin.)

Some years ago, I wrote a column in just, taunting the remnants of the dupes of the Soviet Union — no, they were much, much worse than dupes (this was when Gorbachev had just mounted the throne) — in which I made up a roster of those who had tried to wriggle out of their slavishness to evil. I made up ludicrous names for them, and I ended the decency to blush. But I feared my nonsense — still in absurdist mode —

by saying that they shouldn't be unhappy just because Brezhnev was dead, because Mao Tse-tung was even dead, and he would surely look after his acolytes, dead or alive. (After all, if there was a hitch, the followers could always mark time in Cuba, the very last outpost of Soviet democracy.)

Now go back and look at my paragraph, my serious paragraph, about occidentals in scores of millions flocking to China and her wonderfully democratic political system. And then spit, or I will.

Let me wander a little. Why did so many millions — yes, it is very many millions — give allegiance to manifest evil, though the evil was obvious and terrible? For a considerable time after Stalin and Stalinism had dissolved entirely, many of the shamed tried to wriggle out by saying that they hadn't seen, or understood, what was happening; that filmy, lying excuse disappeared and dissolved very early. Whereupon other millions coolly transferred their equal allegiance to an equal evil, now a Chinese one. When He Guangwei shuffles the pack, there will be very many other millions from many truly democratic lands scurrying to see China, or the bits the leaders will allow them to see.

Come: let us follow the group: we have seen the Great Wall, and by domestic constraint we have seen at every open door a neat, plump, smiling housewife (or, of course, househusband). When we ask a different kind of question, such as "Do you really believe that people in genuine democratic countries are willing to believe that China's record on human rights is more or less the same as ours?", our guide smiles and says that there are some bad people in Britain and in other countries who tell nasty lies about his country: he smiles again, and all is happy and smiling.

Or almost. For the name of Wei

Jingsheng keeps popping up, particularly when I am around, because whenever I see a headline which reads something like "China defends its record on human rights", I know that the foulest kind of lies are stewing in the pot, and that there is nothing — nothing — that could be called respect for human rights.

You should be raging by now, but cool down for a moment, and think not about the hideous fate of Wei Jingsheng, but about the man himself. Consider: the moment he got out of a jail after being incarcerated for 15 years for disagreeing with the Government, he went back in again for exactly the same reason. Would you do that? And for nothing but the truth? And without remuneration for good conduct? And under judges who could only be called

whores, for the very good reason that they are whores?

Rude, am I? Try this. When Wei Jingsheng was sentenced to 14 years (this is his second such sentence, not the first), the thing on the bench — his name is Wang Ming — was obviously not only told what sentence he was to give out (that, of course, is the standard form of "justice" in China), but was even told that the trial was to be described as "an ordinary case". There were two other villains in the matter, and I might as well name them too: the other thing judge was Wang Yesheng, and the prosecutor was Wang Huajun. Asked whether the trial had been fair, the rehearsed answer was, yes it had been fair, because Wei Jingsheng had attacked the Government.

Amid this, we are told that there is respect for human rights in China. To prove it (and this gets very macabre), the Chinese Government has published a weird kind of *apologia*. It is 23,000 words long and I am willing to bet a substantial sum that there is not a single word of truth anywhere in it.

Bernard Levin

Philip Howard



Fishing should be for farmers, not pirates

Cry haddock and let slip the dogfish of war! Any day now the latest fish war is going to break out in the enigmatically named Irish Box. "Armadas" of huge Spanish trawlers were arriving in the Atlantic west and south of Ireland yesterday. Ere the month is out, you do not need to be a mystic astrologer prophesying mumbo-jumbo in "ere" language to predict fishy uproar over quotas (impossible to police), nets (too long and too synthetically unbreakable), meshes (too small), dumping of unsalutary factory or out-of-quota fish overboard and other unsporting practices which are not exclusively Spanish.

Robert Benchley is credited with being asked in an examination to discuss a previous fish war on the Great Banks from the point of view of (a) the United States and (b) Canada. And to have opened his essay: "I have no knowledge of either (a) or (b). Accordingly I propose to approach this question from the point of view of the cod." I hope he was awarded alpha plus.

For he had a point. From the earliest records, fish have had a fried deal from chippers and a raw deal from sushi-eaters. The marginal relationship between man and fish shoals in language and literature. Fish are the lottery for which man toils not neither does he spin, especially not on lochs reserved for wet fly. Homer's conventional epithet for the sea was the "unharvested". Perhaps he meant that fishing was a matter of luck and cunning, not husbandry. When blind Homer sang, you could not harvest the sea, just cast your net, trident or hook on the waters and hope for luck. Fishing was the atavistic activity of men as hunter-gatherer and pirate, not man as farmer tilling the stubborn earth in the sweat of his plough. Fishing of all sorts is the most popular participatory sport for males in Britain, because it is extremely idle and has old hunter-gatherer roots.

The trouble is that modern fishing technology has taken the lucky dip out of fishing and turned it into factory-farming. Nets a mile long and industrial vacuum sea-cleaners sweep up every fish in their track. Even the tourist fishing boats from Girvan and the other little harbours use radar to find the shoals of mackerel, instead of following the gannets and local knowledge. This is genocide.

Perhaps the sea was unharvested to our fisher-farmers because the shoals of silver tunnies seemed boundless, un-sown and unharvestable, a gift from the gods. French driftnets preserved their oyster. English *laissez faire* turned the oyster from poor man's food into an impossible luxury. Sam Johnson fed his cat Hodge on oysters. And he went out to buy them himself, in order to spare his slave/servant, Francis Barber, the humiliation of shopping for such common near-fish.

It makes no difference to a fish whether it is caught by Catalan hooks or drift-net, or whether it ends up in a tin unsuitable for tuna or on a fishmonger's slab for foodies. But even tuna must worry about man — a porcupine half its size and a third of its weight, who can swim only very slowly and with inelegant splashing at the Olympics.

By fishy standards, man is not unintelligent. Widespread myths record dolphins having rescued men in the soup because of the sweetness of their singing. And modern dolphins have found that men can be trained, after a few months of captivity, to come to the edges of their pools and feed them heerings three times a day, to the applause of the dolphinarium sentimentalists.

When man fished by hook and by crook, the shoals could coexist with him. No longer. Even a MAFF bureaucrat should see that unless international organisations and national governments control the efficiency and rapacity of their fishermen, the oceans will empty, like the Mediterranean Sea. Too many boats chase too few fish with too much advantage.

Until now, the primitive law of the ocean has been eat or be eaten. Now, by enforced and unpopular quotas on the numbers of fishermen (rather than on unenforceable quotas on the numbers of fish too efficiently rolled out of their element), by fish sanctuaries and fish farms, by banning destructive modern fishing technologies, and by buying out the fishermen, fish's old enemy must restrain his greed. Or he will end up on a silent sea.

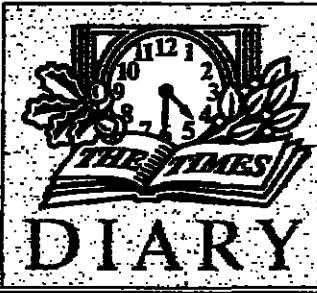
No gripes

ENGLAND'S abject cricketing performance in South Africa yesterday was enough to bring on a bout of indignation in any of the team's supporters. But nobody reached for the gripe-water quicker than Jack Bannister, the British commentator who promised in a local newspaper that he would "eat this page" if South Africa won.

Bannister was held to his promise within minutes of the square-cut that earned South Africa its crushing Test victory. With local television cameras dancing gleeful attendance, Bannister was presented with the page on a silver platter, along with one bottle of South African chardonnay and a flask of digestive salts. He swallowed his pride along with the entire page.

The technique was to tear the newspaper into strips, then chew the page strip by strip, and swallow with a good gulp of wine. Aside from the odd burp, Bannister, who prides himself as a bookmaker, behaved with impressive decorum throughout the whole dyspeptic episode.

Prince Edward's girlfriend, Sophie Rhys-Jones, arrived on Wednesday for her first day's work



Sting is having to build a hot-house at his Elizabethan mansion in Wiltshire in order to provide for his newly acquired pet iguanas.

He is spending thousands of pounds kitting out an orangery for his new pair of Central American tree lizards, which grow to be 4 ft and have a rapacious appetite.

The scaly creatures are a present from staff, explains their supplier, Pete Sheppard of the Porton Aquatic and Garden Centre. "Sting's head gardener came along to reserve a couple of iguanas," he says. "The staff wanted to buy him something unusual as a Christmas present."

RADIO-HAMS in Harrow have got their anorak-strings in a twist. They are itching to get King

Husain of Jordan to attend their golden anniversary this year of the local radio society.

Husain, who attended Harrow School, has long surfed the airwaves, and first visited the society in 1979 after an introduction from a communications officer at the Ministry of Defence. He soon became an honorary member: his call sign is JY1; and he recently made "friendly" radio contact between Jordan and Israel.

Derek Morris, president of the Radio Society of Harrow, is impressed: "His Majesty operates when in London. He speaks to people all over the world."

Corset does

A SPRIGHTLY young bird pops up this week in *The Oldie* magazine. Lord Menzies's mother Marutha, who celebrates her 100th birthday this month, is profiled by her daughter-in-law.

Lady Menzies lays bare the secrets of Marutha's longevity in the article, and says that, as a youngster, she used to sleep in her corset the better to maintain her 22-inch waist.

The doughty girl has a touch of the Katharine Hepburns about her. La Hepburn, 88, still goes swimming in the lake by her house, even if she has to break the



Birthday girl Marutha: are icy baths the secret?

ice, and Lady Menzies explains that Marutha has lived for so long as a result of "bathing in ice-cold water, into which she has tossed two dozen grapefruit skins or a half-dozen bottlefuls of a very smelly drink called Kwass".

High above the woods in Klosters where the Prince of Wales's bodyguard broke his thigh sits a cosy cabin, the Alte Schwendi mountain restaurant, purveyor of fine fare and finer cocktails. But

in the words of tabloid vulgarians, it is most likely a "snow-go zone" for the Prince and his party. *Fride of place above the door is given to an enormous blow-up of the famous seductive photograph by Patrick Demarchelier of a young blonde, the Princess of Wales, which once graced the cover of Vogue. Locals have it that the Alte Schwendi is known as the Alte Di.*

P.H.S



NUMBER WARS

Labour's challenge on Tory economic ground

Short of another Falklands war, or a fatal accident occasioned by a bus to Tony Blair, what could deliver the next election to the Conservatives? The economy, stupid. It is the party's one best hope. Northern Ireland is too remote an issue, Europe too divisive and devolution too complicated. As our economics editor, Anatole Kaletsky, wrote yesterday, this year is likely to see more pounds in people's pockets. To economic determinists like Michael Heseltine, that means more positive points in opinion polls.

Although dry economic statistics have indicated a recovery for some years, the upturn has taken an unconscionable time to be detected by the public. That is because higher taxes and low wage growth have prevented better economic conditions from feeding through into the critical "feel-good" factor: personal disposable income, or cash take-home pay. This measure saw its smallest increase in 1994 since the 1940s, and last year was not much better. But in 1996, it looks set to rise by 5 per cent or more.

Hence the timing of the new year newspaper advertisements from the Conservative and Labour parties. The Tories have been waiting for some time to start trumpeting their economic achievements; until now they feared that such boasts would be met with cynical laughter. But a combination of tax cuts, rising house prices and lower interest rates have given consumers the sense that their prosperity is taking a turn for the better. Reports from the high street seem to tell the same story.

Thus newspaper readers are being asked careful questions in full-page advertisements: which country has the lowest mortgage rates for 30 years, the lowest basic rate of tax for over 50 years, the lowest unemployment of any major European country, and so on? Not Germany, not France, but "our country". This message is likely to be much repeated in the run-up to the election, culminating in the old but perennially successful slogan, "Don't let Labour ruin it".

Yesterday Labour was swift in its attempt to ruin the message at birth. It reran a version of a newspaper advertisement earlier used in November, but suitably changed to challenge the Conservative version of a bright, confident economy. "Which country," it asked, "has slumped from 13th to 18th in the world prosperity league?" Our Country, of course. The headline was followed by further questions detailing Britain's poor performance relative to other countries. Yes, but Labour would do even worse, is the Tories' immediate response. Think of the social chapter and the minimum wage; they would make Britain still less competitive.

Both advertisements are judicious in the choice of facts that best suit their purpose. Labour is deliberately selective in its claims about unemployment and poverty. The Tories vaunt the lowest basic rate of tax for 50 years, but fail to draw attention to higher VAT and lower reliefs and allowances. Labour has good points to make on poor educational standards and broken tax promises. The Tories can justifiably be proud of low inflation and mortgage rates and high foreign investment.

But which party will benefit most from this battle of the statistics? The Conservatives are pleased to see Labour fighting them on their ground. In recent elections, Labour has tended to shy away from economic arguments, preferring to focus on its own issues of health and education. Mr Blair has been audacious in taking the fight to his opponents' territory: yesterday he cheekily told a Japanese audience that he wanted Labour to be seen as the party of business. He hopes, if not to win, at least to neutralise the Tories' advantage.

The Tory economic message is certainly the best hope that John Major possesses. But it will not be an easy winner. Voters will not quickly forget the tax rises of the past few years; and if they show signs of doing so, Labour will surely remind them.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

Britain, the Saudis and Muhammad al-Masari

Yesterday was a bad day for London's most vociferous Saudi Arabian dissident. Dr Muhammad al-Masari, in the capital with his fax machine for nearly two years now, has been served with deportation orders. Get thee to Dominica, he has been told, for you are upsetting our steadfast allies in Saudi Arabia — the House of Saud — by your criticism of royal corruption there. Your constant demand for an "Islamic government" in the desert kingdom, directed to anyone who will listen, sows only problems for us.

Yesterday was a bad day, also, for Ann Widdecombe, the Home Office minister charged with overseeing asylum matters. From her egregious words on the radio — explaining the Government's decision to punt Dr Masari in a Caribbean direction — three sentences stand out. "We have had a difficult balancing act"; "We have got enormous export considerations"; and "Britain's interests as a whole do require his removal". The bluntness was unimpeachable; the reasoning less so.

Of course Britain has a difficult balancing act; and since it is not a case of balancing like with like, but one of balancing "values" against "interests", the difficulties are only enhanced. Dr Masari is in this country because he would, almost certainly, meet an unpleasant fate in Saudi Arabia. The Government of King Fahd detested him; that of his successor-elect, Crown Prince Abdullah, detests him too. It is easy to see why, for Dr Masari writes things like this: "The House of Saud has thieved at least half the State's revenues. What does astonish us, however, is the addition to theft and embezzlement which continues unabated even at the very peak of an economic crisis." Saudi officials, unsurprisingly, have called for Dr Masari to be silenced. They have also rumbled ominously of a possible loss to Britain of

lucrative contracts with Saudi Arabia if such silence were not imposed swiftly.

As recently as November last year, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said that although the Government did not like the presence of people like Dr Masari, it could take no action against them unless they broke the law. "We take a very hard line," Mr Rifkind said, "but we act against terrorism, not opinions." Yet that important distinction — between the voicing of opinion and the incitement to violence — seems to have been glossed over in yesterday's decision to deport Dr Masari.

The decision has been influenced almost wholly by Britain's export considerations: and these are not inconsiderable. In 1994, the Saudis bought £1.5 billion worth of British goods. Vickers is presently bidding against French and American competition for a £900 million order for more than 200 tanks. The 1985 al-Yamamah oil-for-arms deal, signed by Margaret Thatcher, could come to be worth £20 billion to Britain over 20 years. A very legitimate question is thus raised: what should Britain do if the presence of Dr Masari endangers the health of so important a golden goose?

There are three options: leave him alone; let him stay, but order him to be silent; or deport him. The first has obvious commercial risks. The second would be unlawful: no court would permit the deprivation of his freedom of speech. The Government's option is the third. But what are the costs? Dr Masari has broken no law; and in refusing to consider his return to Saudi Arabia, the Government acknowledges the danger there to his life. The Home Secretary probably has the power to deport Dr Masari, but his decision will come under serious scrutiny when the Saudi dissident appeals. His departure may serve our immediate commercial interest: but the moral cost is high.

THE WATER PEOPLE

Aquarians are water-bearers, a cool, elemental occupation that may — with a little inventive updating of these mystic signs — be interpreted as the forerunner of science. The four elements, indeed, were the basis of all medieval speculation on the physical world, though most of the experiments by ancient doctors of physic were directed at transforming one element into another and, if possible, most of them into gold. Modern science is more diverse. But a cluster of modern scientists have been born under the water-bearing star, thereby endowing them, above all, with intellectual faculties, scepticism and a somewhat lukewarm temperament. Aquarians are consequently rather cold fish as lovers but ideally suited to hours in a sterile laboratory.

Thomas Edison, who brought music and light into the world with the electric lamp and the phonograph, was an Aquarian. So were Darwin and Galileo. These giants of electrophysics, zoology and astronomy have drawn the framework round our modern world. Who can forget the legend of the obstinate Italian dropping differently weighted balls from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to obscurantist sceptics below? Like many scientists, he had a spot of bother with

the authorities, in his case over the small question of whether the Sun went round the Earth or vice-versa. He recanted, and on his deathbed recanted his recantation — "epurus si muove". The lesson for those competing for research council grants, is that you can say what you like on television as long as you don't fake your test results.

Aquarians may be coolly rational, but with a ruling planet as frigid as Uranus and Pluto as a career planet, they are advised to avoid chilliness. The advice has fallen on some deaf ears. Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer, trudged a cold path to fame, and Charles Lindbergh cannot have been much warmer up alone in the clouds above the Atlantic. Livingston and Stanley, however, who were born and met under the same star, had less of a cold coming of it.

The record certainly shows Aquarians as pioneers. Three of the greatest American Presidents, Lincoln, Roosevelt and Reagan, were born in this month, though perhaps only one them — or rather, his wife — bothered to consult the horoscope to learn its heavenly guidance. They were all, in their way, cool in the face of adversity; and indeed the world owes as much to a January temperament as it does to June fire.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

The myths and making of Singapore's 'tiger' economy

From Mr Francis Davis

Sir, As a Labour Party member I was pleased to read Lord Rees-Mogg's advocacy of aspects of Singapore's welfare strategy as the potential focus for new Labour policy ("Blair could make it the year of the tiger", January 1). However, the myth that Singapore's success is a simple victory of market mechanisms needs to be challenged.

While it is true that Singapore citizens make compulsory contributions to the Central Provident Fund (CPF), the rate of interest return that they receive from government is much lower than the market would pay. The surplus that the State generates in this way consequently provides a pool of resources available to spend on strategic projects, such as the large government housebuilding programme (in which many personal CPF deposits are also subsequently invested).

Moreover, the real force for the development of savings in Singapore is not CPF deposits but the monopoly rents gleaned from highly profitable state-owned enterprises such as Singapore Telecom and the Port of Singapore Authority.

The People's Action Party has been able to mobilise these sources of funding to heavily subsidise incoming foreign investors. Those deemed to have "pioneer" status can often attract as much as 50 cents of subsidy to each dollar of external investment.

Thus, whilst Singapore might not be able to manipulate the world econ-

omy, she has been able to aggressively pursue economic goals and sought-after outcomes at home. This, of course, has all been helped by a highly regulated wage market, full employment and a predominantly young population.

The "tiger" economies have much to teach us but their example needs to be critically examined. In addition to Singapore's state-led successes new Labour should take account of European good practice in relying on the voluntary sector which in Singapore is relatively small to reflect Western social diversity and to ensure civil liberties.

In the meantime Lord Rees-Mogg is to be congratulated for raising the issue and Labour's front bench should be encouraged to learn from what is best in the "tiger" experience.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS DAVIS,
19 Twissell Thorne,
Church Crookham, Hampshire.

From Mr David Hughes

Sir, William Rees-Mogg is right in pointing to the success of Singapore's Central Provident Fund and the potential for transplanting the concept to Britain. It is just one of several Singapore strategies which could work well here. But there is no chance of implementing most of them while Britain remains within the EU.

Until 1965 Lee Kuan Yew was the most ardent of federalists, advocating

and temporarily achieving Singapore's federation with the Malaysian states. He saw no future for a tiny, independent Singapore. He subscribed to much the same line now pushed by the European federalists: going it alone was widely seen as an almost unthinkable option.

When the split with Malaysia came in 1965 Lee wept in front of the television cameras. Yet the same man went on to prove that a politically and economically independent Singapore could not only survive but prosper to an extent unimaginable thirty years ago.

The economic success of Singapore must surely say something to those who argue that Britain has no future outside a federal Europe. The analogy is not exact but it is close enough. If tiny Singapore (population barely 3 million) can thrive on its own, why should an independent Britain be just a pipe dream?

Independent decision-making has been a vital part of Singapore's success. Although it is an enthusiastic member of the Association of South East Asian Nations it could never give up its cherished sovereignty to anything remotely like the extent that Britain has already surrendered it to the EU.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HUGHES,
13 Spring Lodge Close,
Eastbourne, Sussex.
January 3.

Loyalty to party and to principles at Westminster

From Sir Anthony Grant, MP for Cambridgeshire South West (Conservative)

Sir, One of the reasons suggested for the defection of Emma Nicholson (letter, January 1, 3) was lack of a government job. This has become endemic among modern MPs. No sooner are they elected than they pester for preferment. If frustrated they choose the most convenient controversial issue on which to rebel.

Unfortunately this all too often proves successful. Either the leadership responds with something to keep the MP quiet or the MP becomes indoctrinated with media attention resulting often in more agreeable, and better remunerated, activity. Those content merely to care for their constituents and, broadly, support the party which elected them, are taken for granted.

The worrying effect of all this is a blurring of the distinction, so fundamental to parliamentary democracy, between the legislature and the executive. This is a key area of reform for the next Parliament.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY GRANT,
House of Commons,
January 2.

From Mr Dick Taverne

Sir, Emma Nicholson has been attacked for her "betrayal" of the Conservative Party. It is one of the less attractive features of our political ethos that to give up your principles for the sake of your party is regarded as a virtue; to give up your party for the sake of your principles is regarded as a sin.

Parties are an important part of our democratic institutions: through them people can combine to achieve common aims and put shared beliefs into practice. But parties have no special moral virtue in themselves which makes leaving them a "betrayal". Parties change. When they abandon the principles or beliefs for which you have joined them, it is more honour-

able to leave than to stay. To argue for the re-election of a party which you actually think will do more harm than good is to live a lie.

Incidentally, I did not defect from Labour to the SDP (report, December 30). I did join the SDP when it was launched, but I left the Labour Party in 1972 and was re-elected twice as an independent, describing myself as a social democrat eight years before the SDP was founded.

Yours faithfully,
DICK TAVERNE,
60 Cambridge Street, SW1,
January 4.

From Mr L. P. Cleminson

Sir, An MP is elected to represent all the electors of a constituency, not just the party who nominated him or her. In any event, because of the first-past-the-post system, many MPs are elected by a minority of their constituency voters.

It follows that Emma Nicholson may well be acting in the best interests

Election dates

From Mr Walter Grey

Sir, Once again, in the late stages of a parliament, there is talk of an early general election, intensifying and prolonging economic as well as political uncertainty.

But, barring a government's defeat in a confidence vote, or a similar crisis not soluble by other means, should the date of the election continue to be left to the convenience (or machinations) of the already over-powerful Prime Minister?

Isn't it time, once the next election is out of the way, for an all-party agreement in Parliament at the earliest opportunity to institute fixed-term (say, four-year) parliaments instead?

Yours faithfully,
WALTER GREY,
12 Arden Road, Finchley, N3,
January 4.

Victims of stress

From Mr Hamish Francis

Sir, Your report (December 19) about the disquiet of Barclays Bank staff over longer hours and unpaid overtime was shortly afterwards followed by the excellent interview (December 29) of Professor Cary Cooper by Valerie Grove, on the hazards of overwork.

As a reformed workaholic, I have little to add to the comments about the effects on marriage and on physical health, except to emphasise the serious risks to mental wellbeing in the form of anxiety and depression.

The likely loss of sense of humour was mentioned, and this is often accompanied by a degree of self-importance, sometimes evidenced by the "sandwiches at my desk syndrome".

In the heyday of work study much attention was paid to properly spaced breaks during working hours and it is sad that this commonsense approach is now so often ignored by business and the professions.

Yours sincerely,
HAMISH FRANCIS,
White House, Winter Hill,
Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire,
January 2.

No need to choose

From Dr Malcolm Taylor

Sir, The Reverend Peter Evans asks (letter, December 30): "Is it truth or is it law that we hold dear?"

Since these concepts are not mutually exclusive would it not be preferable to cherish both?

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM TAYLOR,
12 Salisbury Way,
Astley, Manchester.

Honours uneven

From Judge Nicholas Beddard

Sir, Of the 29 Knights Bachelor in today's list of New Year Honours, eight are shown as professors. There would seem to be a degree of over-representation here.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BEDDARD,
The Old School,
Sudbourne, Nr Orford, Suffolk,
December 30.

A racing cert

From Mr P. W. Estling

Sir, Congratulations to Thunderer on his winning the Racing Post National Press Challenge for racing tipsters (reports, Sport, January 1).

I see that he won by reason of the fact that he lost less than any of the other tipsters and that when the year of the competition ended he still had £760.50 in hand of the bank of £1,000 with which he started.

This is a neat illustration of the old racing adage that the only sure way to make a small fortune backing horses is to start with a large fortune.

Yours faithfully,
PETER W. ESTLING,
3 Llysnewydd Cottages,
Drelich Felindre, Llandysul, Dyfed,
January 1.

Sports letters, page 30

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Ready solution to Army shortages

From Viscount Slim

Sir, Anyone who watched that brilliant film about the Gurkhas on BBC2 on Boxing Day (letter, December 30) must be absolutely mystified that at a time when the British Army is gravely overstretched, with over 50 per cent of its available strength committed to active operations at any one time and its combat arms under-recruited from about 2,000 to 3,000, the Ministry of Defence continues cutting the Brigade of Gurkhas, an integral part of the British Army, from some 8,000 to as little as 2,500.

It is true that, perhaps as a result of parliamentary and other pressures, ministers have now agreed to retain, for three more years, another 400 of the 1,700 Gurkhas who are due for redundancy.

But with recruiting of first-class Gurkha material presenting no problem at all, as so graphically illustrated in the film, compared to the present difficulties of British "teeth arms" recruitment, so severely damaged and run down owing to the savage government defence cuts, the question must be asked, "why only 400?" Surely at least one extra combat battalion of Gurkhas, some 700 to 800 strong, could be retained without difficulty.

Splitting 400 Gurkhas into small packets of platoon and company size to prop up understrength and poorly recruited British infantry battalions is not satisfactory.

A further battalion of Gurkhas, easily immediately available now, would go a considerable way to alleviate the ongoing overstretched and undermanned state of the British Army. This, combined with a major government-supported and financed national recruitment campaign, is urgently needed to overcome severe manpower shortages.

Any government that slashes its defence forces to the brink has at least the duty to ensure its remaining combat units are fully manned and capable of operations from full strength. The nation has a right to expect nothing less.

The BBC film ended by quoting those splendid words: "The Gurkha, the bravest of the brave; never had a country more faithful friends than they." We really do treat our true friends in a most extraordinary way.

Yours etc,
SLIM,
House of Lords,
January 3.

Caring by numbers

From Mr Colin L. Bowater

Sir, My army number (letters, December 18, 27, January 3) is now more than 40 years old and I continue to use it daily: the last three digits for the combination lock on my briefcase, last four for my bank card PIN and all eight digits for the password on my computer.

I will never forget it and I don't need to write it down. On reflection, it's just about the most useful thing I brought with me into civvy street.

I am sure you will understand if I refrain from disclosing the number to you.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN L. BOWATER,
15 Grayburn Close,
Chalfont St Giles,
Buckinghamshire,
January 3.

Tall order

From Mr Ian Bryant

Sir, Mr Richard Anderson's suggestion (letter, December 29) that passengers might be prepared to pay a modest increase in fares for a bit more space will find no favour with scheduled airlines. They need to make economy class uncomfortable to persuade class commercial travellers that the huge additional cost of flying club/business class is justified.

No finance director is going to sanction the extra cost if his executives can be expected to face foreign clients with bodies refreshed and brains razor-sharp after relaxing flights in economy cabins.

But I am sure there's scope for charter airlines to charge more in return for more leg and seat room. Many people would be happy to pay £200 instead of £130 for a flight to the Canaries provided the seat space was designed for the average 5ft 10in, 12st man instead of for a juvenile connoisseur.

Yours faithfully,
IAN BRYANT,
Hipping Hall,
Cowan Bridge,
Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria,
January 1.

From Mr Stephen Cox

Sir, I sympathise with Mr Richard Anderson's predicament inside aeroplane.

I too am oft tall, and find that the length of the handles of garden forks and spades must have been set at least 100 years ago.

It is for this reason, and not laziness, that I am compelled to delegate the digging of the vegetable garden to my wife.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN COX,
Eynballow,
Sandy Lane,
Rushmore, Farnham, Surrey,
January 1.

All in the mind

From Mr Gavin Littaur

Sir, Mike Bennett, a fellow member of Mensa, states (letter, December 30) that genius is a quality ascribed to "those who have the ability to produce something new, something original". Might I seek the courtesy of your columns to challenge this assertion?

In 1995 I composed five pieces for the piano in my spare time. The works are, admittedly, both new and original and, last May, I played two of them for the Mensa gala concert at the Royal College of Music.

However, I am certainly no musical genius: this demands exceptional creative power, such as that enjoyed by Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. There again, I could be a late developer.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN LITTAUR,
24 Stormont Road, Highgate, No.
January 1.

Beauties as beasts

From Mr T. L. P. Ridge

Sir, While not wishing to contest the view of Ms Veronica Kish (letter, January 2) that there exists a "stereotype" that good people are beautiful and bad people ugly, I think it rather extreme to suggest that the latest Bond film perpetuates this in that it features one scurred villain.

She may also have noticed that Bond's female adversaries, not only in *Goldeneye* but in countless earlier productions, were always beautiful and invariably evil.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS RIDGE,
Brockley Elm House,
Backwell, Bristol, Avon.

OBITUARIES

SIR ANDREW CARNWATH

Sir Andrew Carnwath, KCVO, a managing director of Barings Brothers, 1955-74, died on December 29 aged 86. He was born on October 26, 1909.

SIR ANDREW CARNWATH made his name in the City of London in the 1950s and 1960s as a senior partner of Barings and as a merchant banker concerned in particular with corporate finance work. Throughout his career in the upper reaches of corporate finance, he remained a calm and relatively detached practitioner. If he seemed at times to be laid back with his wise assessment of situations and sense of timing he won and retained the confidence of corporate clients to a remarkable degree.

He joined Barings in December 1928: his most vivid memory of his first day was of the back view of the senior partner, the Olympian Lord Revelstoke, descending the steps as he set out for Versailles and the conference on German reparations. It was a deeply symbolic scene. Out of the door was Revelstoke, who was to die in Paris, went an era of international bonds issues over which Barings had presided for a century. Now a weakened sterling was forcing the City to cut back its international role and, like others, Barings was refocusing on work for British industry.

Much of this work has come to be known as corporate finance and in this area Carnwath found his niche, working in the years immediately before and after the war under Howard Mills.

Andrew Hunter Carnwath was the son of a doctor. He was educated at Eton where he was a King's Scholar, but not having worked, in his words, "as hard as I should", he failed to win a university scholarship. His school, however, recommended him to Barings. "I had never heard of Barings," he later recounted, "but inquiries showed that I would probably be wise to explore the matter further."



Carnwath started at the bottom, doing a three-month stint in the mail room — then regarded as a formative experience for all new entrants. In the normal course of events he would have gone on to do a general tour of all the departments in the bank, but this was cut short when he caught the partners' attention and was moved swiftly to a recently formed section — new issues — which was charged with working for the partners, doing the detailed background work required for their transactions.

These ranged from straightforward debt issues to finance extensions of London's Underground and the construction of power stations to highly complex schemes to salvage parts of the collapsed Royal Mail shipping group and to rationalise Lancashire's staple industry through the formation of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation.

This work was brought to an abrupt end in 1939 when — after three months firewatching on the roof of the Barings offices — he went to war, ostensibly with RAF Coastal Command but in reality to Blechley Park and code-

breaking. Later he was sent out to Germany as part of a team analysing the effectiveness of Britain's war operations.

Barings pressed for his release later in 1945 and he returned as head of the new issues department. With no staff, a new Companies Act and an unprecedented regulatory environment, it was an especially fraught time for him: "It meant that the documentation was really quite complicated, and I was inventing it as I went along," Carnwath later confessed.

But working initially under Mills and alongside A. W. Giles, a canny Scottish accountant, he became one of the City's most respected figures in this field. In the 1950s and 1960s Barings' corporate finance team, while more low key and less aggressive than some, was a leader in this activity. Carnwath was rewarded with a partnership at the beginning of 1953.

In the 1960s and 1960s British companies were expanding rapidly by acquisition. Carnwath played a key part in Barings' work with companies such as Whitbread, Courtaulds, Allied Breweries, Metal Box, Redland and W. H. Smith. For other clients Barings put in place defensive structures to prevent their takeover. When in 1961 ICI launched a hostile bid for Barings' client, Courtaulds, Carnwath worked day and night for three months along with the board of Courtaulds in what became one of the most aggressive takeover battles of the 1960s. Courtaulds retained its independence.

Later in Carnwath's interests at Barings were more wide-ranging. He was closely involved with the development of Save & Prosper, a pioneer of unit trusts in which he had persuaded Barings to take a substantial interest, and was its chairman for 20 years. He also chaired, from 1971 to 1974, London Multinational Bank, a syndicate bank in which Barings was also interested.

He retired from Barings in 1974, having later sat alongside John Phillimore and John Baring, now Lord

Ashburton, as a senior partner.

Away from Barings, Carnwath's interests were extensive. So far as business was concerned, he held directorships of Equity & Law and of Great Portland Estates and between 1970 and 1972 he was president of the Institute of Bankers.

His City expertise coupled with his approachability, conviviality and, not least, genuine and inquiring interest, meant that his services were much in demand by charitable and educational institutions. He was treasurer of King Edward's Hospital Fund; a member of the Church of England's central board of finance and chairman of its investment management committee; chairman of the Chelmsford diocesan board of finance; and, not least, treasurer of Essex University, which awarded him a doctorate in 1983.

At different times his portfolio also included the Friends of the Tate, the Imperial War Graves Endowment Fund and the Thelborne Children's Trust. In recognition of his King's Fund work, he was appointed KCVO in 1975.

Music was a particular passion. He was a competent pianist and, as Master of the Worshipful Company of Musicians from 1981 to 1982, personally endowed a scholarship for promising young pianists. He also had an enthusiasm for modern British art. At a time when "corporate art" was a new idea, he initiated the collection at Save & Prosper and bought abstracts for Barings.

For many years Carnwath lived at Uxley in Essex where he involved himself in local affairs. His services to the county were manifold and his offices included county councillor, High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant.

In 1939 he married Kathleen Armstrong. They had five sons and one daughter. After her early death in 1968, he married in 1973 Joan Wetherell-Pepper, better known as the author Joan Alexander, who survives him, together with the six children of his first marriage.

TERENCE CUNEO



Terence Cuneo, CVO, OBE, portrait painter, died on January 3 aged 88. He was born on November 1, 1907.

TERENCE CUNEO's career illustrates vividly the folly of talking about "the art world" as though there were any one such coherent thing, when instead there exists a whole galaxy of separate and sometimes mutually exclusive worlds.

In his own sphere Cuneo was about as famous as it is possible to be. But his sphere had little to do with that of, say, the Tate Gallery, or even very much with that of the Royal Academy. While he ran a lengthy and detailed entry in *Who's Who*, many standard art reference books do not mention him.

He was immensely conservative as an artist, to a point that would make Sir Alfred Munnings look like some mad revolutionary tearaway. He was a prime example of that almost vanished breed, the official portrait painter.

He painted not only portraits but what he described as "ceremonial, military and engineering subjects". Designed by nature to be an official war artist, he served in that capacity in the Second World War.

After engaging in underground activities in occupied Europe while with the Royal Engineers during 1941, he devoted himself with considerable flair to producing propaganda paintings for the Ministry of Information, the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office and, of course, the War Artists Advisory Committee, on which he served.

This type of work represented what might be called his

illustrating skills: he was undoubtedly a dashing draughtsman with a real feeling for machinery in action. Some felt, even then, that this very gift for illustration stood in the way of his being accepted as a "serious" artist. He never recognised any important difference between the two functions.

Neither, it would seem, did his patrons. These included many of the highest (if not necessarily the most artistically discriminating) in the land. Understandably, because any one who commissioned Cuneo knew precisely what he would be getting. Cuneo could be relied on, at the very least, to produce a good photographic likeness, angled perceptibly towards the heroic.

He also had a definite penchant for the larger view: many of his most effective portraits of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, for example, place them fairly and squarely in the midst of a state visit, partaking of ceremonial dinners or laying foundation stones. Others to survive creditably Cuneo's scrutiny on canvas include Edward Heath (the first official portrait as Prime Minister) and Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

These were subjects guaranteed to bring fame and celebrity — he was appointed both OBE (1987) and CVO (1994) — but probably these days not much purely artistic kudos, no matter how well such paintings are done. Cuneo does not seem to have minded particularly: he knew well what his last was, and he stuck to it. Both his parents were artists, and it was never really doubted that he would follow in their footsteps.

After Sutton Valence School

he went straight to Chelsea Art School, and from there to the Slade, in one of its less inspiring periods when the impetus of art had passed elsewhere. He was of approximately the same generation as another royal favourite, Edward Seago, and cut himself off in much the same way from the fads and fancies of British modernism in the Thirties, but also perhaps from its eccentric vitality. It was as though he decided to follow in the footsteps of Frank Salisbury at a time when more and more of his contemporaries were getting excited about Continental Surrealism: consequently his work is never silly, as theirs sometimes is, but it never, either, generates the sort of unpredictable excitement that more apparently marginal members of the generation such as Edward Burra effortlessly produce.

To be fair, Cuneo never allowed himself to vegetate. He travelled constantly, painted much all over Africa, North America (where he rode the range alongside genuine cowboys and found inspiration in their lives) and the Far East. He exhibited abroad as well as at home, and got an honourable mention at the Paris Salon in 1957. He sometimes ventured successfully outside his usual range, as with his impressive Engineering Mutual for the Science Museum, also in 1957. It was hardly his fault that he was fascinated by ceremony at a time when, for most others, it had lost its resonance along with its splendour.

He married Catherine Mayfield Monro in 1934, who predeceased him together with one of his two daughters. His other daughter survives him.

JEREMY J. BEADLE

Jeremy J. Beadle, music critic and broadcaster, died of an AIDS-related illness on December 27 aged 39. He was born on April 28, 1956.

JEREMY J. BEADLE was an editor's dream writer. Any request for an exact number of words of copy by a certain date in a particular style was always met perfectly and on time. He could write or hold court knowledgeably — especially over several drinks — on almost any subject including music, sport, soap operas, literature, philosophy or politics. Indeed, when short of money in his early working life, Beadle played the quiz machines in public houses to raise extra cash — on more than one occasion an observant landlord barred him from returning because of his high success rate.

His cackling laughter and almost manic enthusiasm, together with an unassuming literary style, endeared Beadle both to his friends and his readers. His writings on clas-

sical music, particularly for *Classic CD* magazine, demolished many of the barriers often found in serious writing on the subject. That is not to say that his writing was flippant. Rather, in his reviews he refused to bow to PR pressures from multinational record labels, seeing through the gloss of a product instead to the artistry itself.

On one occasion Beadle wrote in *Classic CD* about the conducting on a recording of Brahms's Symphony No 3: "It sounds as though Claudio Abbado hasn't a clue what he's doing." The record company in question was not happy, but Beadle's statement was typical of his indisputable integrity. He could not be swayed by status, hype or reputation. Likewise he would assess without prejudice some of the more gimmicky classical recordings to emerge in recent years.

Among Beadle's other contributions to the world of classical music was the highly popular *Virgin Guide to Classical Music*. He also co-wrote



with *Classic CD* editor Rob Ainsley *The Sideways Guide to Composers* (illustrated with cartoons by John Minnion) and contributed to the recently published tome *The Ultimate Encyclopaedia of Classical Music*.

Jeremy John Beadle (he detested being confused with his television namesake and regularly used the middle initial) was educated at the Minister School and later won a scholarship to St Peter's School, York, before reading

Classical Mods at Oriel College, Oxford. He subsequently switched to study his real love, English Literature, in which he obtained a first before completing an MPhil specialising in the novels of Anthony Powell (in whose *Diatribes* Beadle was later mentioned). He spoke regularly at the Oxford Union and became a polished speech-writer for many of his colleagues.

After teaching in Oxford he worked in London for the GLC and the Home Office before becoming a freelance writer and broadcaster. Both his voice and his writings were all well known to Radio 3 listeners. He presented *Prom News* and Radio 3's *Christmas Quiz*, gave interval talks on a variety of subjects and wrote a radio play, *The Gates of the Underworld* (1990), about the German critic and writer E. T. A. Hoffmann. All aspects of musical tradition interested him. Later he was engaged in reviewing 20th-century works but recently published a book on the German symphonic tradition, *The Age of Romanticism* (1995).

Beadle's memory seemed vast. In the world of popular music he knew every number one hit of the past 35 years and a multitude of facts and figures about this genre. His third book, *Will Pop Ever Itself?* (1993), is widely regarded as the standard reference work on post-modern popular music.

Beadle's homosexuality was no secret and he wrote two novels set in the seedy London underworld for GMP, the gay publishers.

He was a chubby and personable man. His London flat consisted of complete, yet organised, chaos. Books, compact discs and videos were piled endlessly around the walls and on the floors as testimony to his devouring hunger for knowledge — a knowledge which he then generously shared. February's edition of *Classic CD* contains a number of articles and reviews compiled shortly before his premature death.

He was unmarried and leaves a sister.

PROFESSOR DEREK BIRCHALL

Professor Derek Birchall, OBE, FRS, research chemist and inventor, died after a road accident on December 7 aged 65. He was born on October 7, 1930.

WITHOUT the benefit of any formal scientific training, Derek Birchall became one of the most inventive research chemists of his generation. His research, most of it done for ICI, ranged from fire retardant materials, inorganic fibres and cement to the biochemistry of silicon and aluminium. He was also a teacher, holding a professorship of inorganic chemistry at Keele University.

James Derek Birchall was brought up by his grandfather, his mother having died in childbirth. He was the son of an entrepreneur, and Birchall inherited something of his father's adventurous spirit. He was educated locally, in Lancashire, and left school at 14, after which he apprenticed himself to a scientist with a private laboratory. He spent the next five years as a lab assistant. By the age of 19, Birchall had made himself

an expert on flame retardation, writing a book on the subject and patenting an idea for a new sort of retardant.

After National Service in the early 1950s, he joined a company in Liverpool and oversaw the manufacture of his fire retardant. At the same time he attended evening classes at Wigan Technical College to round off his education. He joined ICI in 1957 and remained with them until 1992, heading a team of researchers. His work there centred on both fire retardants and the controlled crystallisation of common inorganic materials. He brought the two fields together with his invention of Monnex in the mid-1960s, a dry fire extinguisher.

Long before bio-inorganic chemistry became the fashionable area it is today, Birchall was reflecting on nature's use of inorganic compounds — silicates and carbonates, for example — and in particular on the strong mechanical properties of shells compared with the brittleness of man-made materials such as cement and concrete, which were often based on the same

chemistry as the natural artefacts. The invention of viscous plastic processing in the 1970s, in which ceramics were mixed with a small amount of organic polymer and a suitable solvent, paved the way, among other products, for "macro-defect free" cement. Inorganic fibres were obvious candidates for fire retardant purposes but Birchall decided to try to spin inorganic fibres in a similar way to synthetic polymer fibres. The result, in 1972, was Saffil, a fibre made up of "whiskers" of alumina with excellent heat and chemical resistance, and which could be used as an insulating blanket in everything from space vehicles to car engines.

Birchall was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1982, and appointed OBE in 1990. He retired from ICI two years later, and moved on to Keele University as Professor of Inorganic Chemistry. He was two years away from retirement there and was enjoying his work with students when a road accident caused his death.

He is survived by his two sons, his wife having predeceased him.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FLATSHARE

BATTERSEA single flat in 3 bed house, furnished, 10 min. walk to station, 10 min. walk to shops, 10 min. walk to bus, 10 min. walk to park, 10 min. walk to school, 10 min. walk to church, 10 min. walk to library, 10 min. walk to post office, 10 min. walk to police station, 10 min. walk to fire station, 10 min. walk to hospital, 10 min. walk to cinema, 10 min. walk to theatre, 10 min. walk to museum, 10 min. walk to gallery, 10 min. walk to restaurant, 10 min. walk to bar, 10 min. walk to club, 10 min. walk to disco, 10 min. walk to pub, 10 min. walk to cafe, 10 min. walk to shop, 10 min. walk to bank, 10 min. walk to post office, 10 min. walk to police station, 10 min. walk to fire station, 10 min. walk to hospital, 10 min. walk to cinema, 10 min. walk to theatre, 10 min. walk to museum, 10 min. walk to gallery, 10 min. walk to restaurant, 10 min. walk to bar, 10 min. walk to club, 10 min. walk to disco, 10 min. walk to pub, 10 min. walk to cafe, 10 min. walk to shop, 10 min. walk to 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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY JANUARY 5 1996

I misled Commons over Rom Data, admits Lang



Lang sent a letter

BY ROBERT MILLER
IAN LANG, the President of the Board of Trade, has admitted that he misled the House of Commons in answers to questions about how £850,000 worth of taxpayers' money was poured into a failed West Country computer firm.

Throughout last year, David Jamieson, Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport, tabled a series of parliamentary questions about grants made by the Department of Trade and Industry to Rom Data Corporation, of Falmouth, when John Dawson, one of the company's directors, had a troubled financial background.

At the outset, ministers assured Mr Jamieson that all the appropriate financial health checks had been made on the directors of Rom Data, which is now the subject of a joint investigation by the Serious Fraud Office and Devon and Cornwall police.

Mr Dawson, who is a former Conservative city councillor in Bath, has a history of bad debts in Britain and the Caribbean. In the early 1980s, Mr Dawson, who is believed to be in Ireland, left the UK before a bankruptcy hearing into the collapse of John Dawson Motor (Holdings) with business and personal debts of nearly £2 million. Another Rom Data

director, Brad Shephard, an American, was declared bankrupt at Truro Crown and County court last October.

Last month, Mr Lang admitted that an internal DTI inquiry had shown that the officials responsible for appraising Rom Data's grant application "were not aware that Mr John Dawson, who was involved with Rom Data Corporation Ltd, was a discharged bankrupt even though that information was held by the Insolvency Service".

In a subsequent letter to John Greenway, the Conservative MP, written on December 21, Mr Lang said that this particular answer "was

intended to set the record straight in respect of earlier answers which had been given earlier this year which were misleading."

"I made it clear that I would report further to the House once the outcome of the Department's own inquiries into other aspects of its handling of the case were known."

The letter continued: "One point I am considering is whether I can throw more light on Mr Dawson's role in the Rom Data Corporation bearing in mind the fact that, as you will be aware, the Serious Fraud Office are also conducting a criminal investigation."

The SFO investigation, codenamed

Operation Gale and led by Detective Inspector Steven Harrison, is understood to have completed questioning a number of former Rom Data employees.

Later this month, detectives are expected to widen their inquiry to overseas jurisdictions including the Caribbean and the US.

Mr Jamieson said last night: "I have now written to the Speaker of the House asking for a full debate at the earliest opportunity on the Rom Data case and the role played by the DTI."

"In particular I want to know why I have been given a series of contradictory answers."

City bankers lambast sacked Exchange chief

BY PATRICIA TEHAN

SOME of the City's most influential figures last night lambasted Michael Lawrence, the departing chief executive of the Stock Exchange, for his failure to win consensus among member firms, and welcomed his swift departure.

With uncharacteristic candour, investment banking heads poured out their dissatisfaction with the way Mr Lawrence has run the Exchange and over the poor relationships that had developed between the Exchange and the Bank of England and Treasury.

In a brief statement, the Exchange said its board had lost confidence in Mr Lawrence, but remained committed to the policies that had been put in place under his leadership. These include

moving ahead with the Sequence project, which is replacing existing information and trading services; carrying the AIM smaller companies market forward; continuing the transition from the current Talisman system to paperless share trading under Crest; and seeking an international role for the Exchange.

Pending the appointment of a new chief executive, John Kemp-Welch, the Exchange chairman, is to lead the executive committee charged with day-to-day management. The suddenness of the departure and the tone of the Exchange's statement demonstrated the bitter feelings that have built up in recent months.

Sir Nicholas Redmayne, joint chief executive of Kleinwort Benson's investment banking operation, said:

"The chairman of the Stock Exchange has our total support. We believe in the long-term plans for the Stock Exchange..." But he added: "The Exchange has to find a way of getting on with its members better than in the past, and with its peer group, particularly the Bank of England and Treasury."

In November, the Exchange was criticised by Pen Kent, an executive director of the Bank of England, who supported calls for it to co-operate with continental European bourses to facilitate the growth of cross-border share dealing.

The appointment of Ian Plenderleith, an executive director of the Bank of England and a member of the Exchange's board, as non-executive deputy chairman of the Exchange, was interpreted in some quarters as a sign that the Bank was in some way behind the changes. But this was denied by the Bank.

Mr Kent's remarks followed an attack earlier in the same month by Rudolf Mueller, the chairman of UBS UK, a division of Union Bank of Switzerland, who accused it of having "missed the boat" to being the central exchange for Europe.

Mr Lawrence had also been criticised by market-makers for his attempts to press ahead with establishing an order-driven quotation system at the Exchange. Market-makers say this would remove liquidity from the system.

But Sir Nicholas said it was "not just the market-making barons" who supported the Exchange's move, it was "the entire membership".

The fiercest criticism of Mr Lawrence came from other investment bankers who preferred not to be named. One said the board was forced to act after "a host of instances" where Mr Lawrence acted in a way that displeased the board or acted without authority.

Another said that Mr Lawrence "was not a particularly easy person to get on with".

Mr Lawrence was on a one-year rolling contract — paid £242,000 in the year to March 31 including a £100,000 bonus — and the payment is now a matter of negotiation between his lawyers and those acting for the Exchange.

Lawrence goes, page 1
Pennington, page 21



Acting role: John Kemp-Welch, Exchange chairman, who takes over day-to-day management

Dollar hits two-year high against the yen

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE dollar soared to its highest level against the yen for nearly two years in Far Eastern trading and held its gains in Europe, buoyed by hopes of an end to the impasse over the US budget.

In late European trading, the US currency was quoted at ¥106.45, from ¥104.95 late on Wednesday. It also rose to DM1.4560 from DM1.4465.

The dollar's move overnight came as Japanese investors, saddled with very low interest rates at home, looked for higher returns overseas. But the new mood of optimism was reinforced by positive noises emerging from official commentaries on the stalemate over the US Budget that has closed down government business for 20 days.

Budget talks between President Clinton and Republican leaders ended with no resolution after three hours on Wednesday night and yesterday's scheduled meeting was postponed at the Republicans' request. However, officials said that should not be read as a sign that talks were breaking down.

Sterling jumped, helped by the rising dollar. It closed at 84.0 on its effective index against a basket of currencies, compared with 83.4 on Wednesday night.

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100 3714.1 (-1.5)
Yield 3.25%
FT-SE All shares 3817.25 (+1.59)
Nikkei 20618.00 (+749.86)
New York Dow Jones 8206.81 (+15.54)
S&P Composite 621.44 (+0.12)

US RATE

Federal Funds 5.14% (7%)
Long Bond 112% (112%)
Yield 5.84% (5.86%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank 6% (6%)
10% long term 110% (110%)
Sterling (GBP) 110% (110%)

STERLING

New York 1.5468* (1.5514)
London 1.5471 (1.5517)
DM 1.4560* (1.4465)
FF 1.7320* (1.7320)
Sfr 1.7182 (1.7065)
Yen 164.54 (161.99)
£ Index 84.0 (83.4)

US \$ DOLLAR

London 1.4562* (1.4465)
DM 1.4560* (1.4465)
FF 1.7320* (1.7320)
Sfr 1.7182 (1.7065)
Yen 164.54 (161.99)
£ Index 84.0 (83.4)

Tokyo close Yen 105.25

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day Mar \$18.05 (\$18.10)

GOLD

London close \$288.55 (\$288.65)
* denotes midday trading price

Morgan Stanley

Morgan Stanley, the US investment banking group, increased its net income 58 per cent to \$187 million in the fourth quarter of the year. The figure compares with \$118 million in the quarter to October 31, 1994, since Morgan Stanley changed its year end from January to November last year. Page 21

BA record

Strong demand for long-haul traffic helped British Airways to fill a record number of seats on its aircraft for the fifth successive quarter. Passenger traffic in the three months to December 31 increased 8.7 per cent while aircraft were 70 per cent full. Page 20, Tempus 22

Fall of chief ends unpopular reign

BY JON ASHWORTH

MICHAEL LAWRENCE'S abrupt departure from the helm of the Stock Exchange, like that of Peter Rawlings before him, leaves the coffin-shaped skyscraper teetering on its foundations.

Heidrick & Struggles, the executive headhunter, took eight months to find a successor for Mr Rawlings after the damage inflicted by the Taurus debacle, and the quest for another new face is not going to be any less difficult.

Mr Lawrence, an "outsider" by his own admission, arrived full of missionary zeal when he took up the post in February 1994, after serving as finance director of Prudential Corporation. He spoke of the need to restore the Stock Exchange's reputation, yet several months later was still regarded as a faceless man, with no clear sense of direction. Insiders said that he was even less popular than the notoriously blunt Mr Rawlings, who was fond of telling minions: "I can speak faster than most people can think."

His appointment was seen as one of the most important for years, coming at a time of intense debate over the Stock Exchange's future. Big Bang in 1986 had taken trading off the floor, and the Financial Services Act had stripped away much of its regulatory functions. The failure of the Taurus paperless share settlement system cost City firms up to £500 million, and left the Stock Exchange looking increasingly like a lame duck.

Mr Lawrence's term was not a happy one. The Stock Exchange failed last year in a bid to scupper the launch of Tradepoint, an electronic trading rival. It tried to change the rules to prevent members from signing up, but the move was blocked.

Further humiliation followed when the Exchange tried to prevent the launch of share trading on the Internet, and issued a writ for defamation — which was swiftly withdrawn — against David Jones, chief executive of ShareLink, the Birmingham-based stockbroker.

Mr Lawrence, 52, completed his doctorate in mathematical physics at Bristol University and spent about 18 years with Price Waterhouse. He is a former chairman of the 100 Group of top UK finance directors.

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Clerical Medical rating cut by S&P

BY ROBERT MILLER

CLERICAL Medical, the UK's sixth largest mutual life office with £15 billion under management, has become the second British insurer this week to have its financial strength rating cut by a leading agency.

The Clerical Medical downgrade by Standard & Poor's (S&P), the US corporation, from an AA- to A+ (Good), follows Tuesday's move by S&P when it cut Scottish Provident's financial health rating from AA to A+.

Clerical Medical reacted angrily to the S&P announcement as the rating agency awarded the insurer its AA- rating only last February. The company said it might withdraw from the rating service as it "now finds it difficult to believe in its integrity".

S&P said that the Clerical Medical downgrade reflects the agency's "more pessimistic view of the UK life industry generally, as regulatory and economic pressures continue

to depress sales volumes. S&P believes that sales volumes in the medium term will be insufficient to fully support Clerical Medical's expense base and that this is likely to result in some erosion of capital. Furthermore, capital has proved to be somewhat more volatile than S&P's expectations."

The rating agency noted, however, that the insurer enjoyed a good market position in the UK and overseas and a record of good investment performance.

Robert Walther, group chief executive of Clerical Medical, said: "Issuing this rating such a short time after awarding a higher one is puzzling. We have used the rating given us in good faith. Changing it so quickly leads me to believe that Standard & Poor's is either making a mistake now, or did so in February 1995, no one call tell which. I believe this action will do more damage to their reputation than ours."

Video Arts set for stock market debut

BY ROBERT MILLER

VIDEO ARTS, the successful training company founded in 1972 by John Cleeve and Sir Anthony Jay, co-author of *Yes Minister*, is set to be listed on the stock market after being bought by MediaKey, the publishing and media group.

MediaKey said yesterday that as well as purchasing Video Arts, from which Mr Cleeve personally made several million pounds by selling his stake to the management in 1989, it is to buy Marshall Information, the book publisher. MediaKey intends to fund the acquisitions by raising £20 million

through a stock market flotation which will capitalise the enlarged group at £30 million.

Video Arts, which last year made an operating profit of £3 million on a turnover of £123 million, retains Mr Cleeve's services through a contract.

The company, which generates 80 per cent of its revenue from its backlist of training videos, has used celebrities such as Dawn French, Robert Lindsay and Hugh Laurie to convey its messages.

Marshall Information is expected to record operating profits of £300,000 on

turnover of about £5.5 million in the year ending December 31, 1995. The company was bought from Harlequin Enterprises in February 1995 by Richard Harman, formerly group managing director of Dorling Kindersley.

Mr Harman, now chief executive of MediaKey, said: "The transactions bring together two highly successful media companies and the placing opens the way to an exciting future in electronic publishing for the group."

The flotation will create the core for a successful electronic publishing venture."



John Cleeve's services are retained

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BANKS	INTEREST RATES PAID		
	1 month deposit	3 month deposit	6 month deposit
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Average of the four major clearing banks	5.05%	5.30%	5.66%

Comparison of the average interest rates paid for a £50,000 deposit between Cater Allen Bank and the average of the four major clearing banks for 1, 3 and 6 months from January 1994 to December 1995. Source: Moneyfacts - Moneyfacts Time Deposits.

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BUSINESS ROUNDUP

New plant to boost British Steel output

The problems of relations with Saudi Arabia has "obviously put a brake on a lot of negotiations," Nicholas de Jongh, a spokesman for GKN said. "As al-Mas'ari is appealing, which might take some time, whatever might have been discussed is still on hold."

BRITISH STEEL is poised to increase its output of steel for cars by making a million tonnes a year after what it claims to be the **fastest building of a particular caster plant** by any steelmaker. The company — which is challenging in the European Court an EU move, whose way was smoothed by the British Government, to sanction subsidies to Irish Steel — has started hot commissioning of the caster plant. At Llanwern just over a year after starting to build it. Equipment from the defunct Ravenscraig steelworks helped to cut the cost of the development, which is to be followed by a fresh blast-furnace. Overall the work cost about £22 million.

The new caster removes a big capacity constraint at Llanwern. It will allow British Steel to lift production there to three million tonnes a year, to be made on a flexible basis to cope with changing demands in the automotive market. Separately, British Steel said that it has no plans to match a 3 per cent price rise by a US competitor.

Tempus, page 22

tracted to southern India's major manufacturers. But the Fiesta will not displace Dagenham's favour with India's middle class. There is no consumer credit in India, with car loans available only from banks at the enormous advantage of 12 per cent. India is now ranked the eighth largest country in the world in chasing power. And the car race is doubling in just three years to around 300,000 vehicles a year. Production is expected to grow to around one million by the end of the century. Honda of Japan, Daewoo of Korea and Peugeot of France already have factories, with Chrysler, America's resurgent number three carmaker, looking to make an entry this year.

But car ownership still remains relatively small for a country with an estimated population of one billion: bicycles and motor scooters still vastly outnumber cars. There are around 24 million scooters, compared with just 3.5 million cars. Ford and its rivals believe all that could soon change.

The sale, which follows the appointment of Sir Colin Mar-

London & C^{ty} 27A Solicitors
For the above named Company

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The sale, which follows the appointment of Sir Colin Mar-

Direct

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□ Last orders for Exchange chief □ Bringing competition into the power business □ Weighing up the options over Forte

Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence

□ THERE was something chillingly brutal about the dismissal of Michael Lawrence yesterday. None of the usual "seeking other business opportunities", no attempt to deny a rift or gild the curriculum vitae for the benefit of future employers.

No, he was shot "with immediate effect" because the rest of the board did not want him around any more. This is the way you treat the servant classes. Mr Lawrence was the grammar school old turned insurance salesman brought in from outside to clear up the mess the last outsider left when he too was shown the door.

He was not part of the City club, unlike the grantees that appointed him, and so was not entitled to the normal courtesies they would expect. Mr Lawrence, most avow, could be difficult, and he did not always carry his colleagues with him. But the danger in firing any chief executive under such circumstances is that it does rather detract from those measures they were brought in by the rest of the board to put into effect, thus tarring all concerned with the same brush.

The trick is to imply that the bust-up was purely personal. So the City newswires were buzzing last night with those ever-useful

"sources close to the LSE board" saying the dispute "was more about personalities than policies". Meanwhile there would be no change to stated policy.

When news of the sacking broke, observers wondered just what had been the breaking point in the relationship between Mr Lawrence and the Exchange. The most obvious goal was the spat with Sharelink that threatened to make the Exchange a laughing stock.

But more damaging has been the behind-the-scenes warfare over the switch from today's quote-driven system of trading, whereby market-makers display the price at which they will buy and sell stock to all and sundry, to an order-driven system. Under the latter, the two sides to a matched bargain conduct it electronically, and the price at which they deal moves the indicated share price.

This is the way New York and continental bourses work, and the American houses trading in the City since Big Bang have

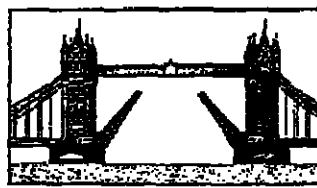
long wanted it here. It is anathema to the traditional market-makers because it wipes out their role. The Exchange said at the end of November it would be progressing towards an order-driven system, prompting disaffection among the old guard and some cynicism as to the pace of that progress.

The next few months will see whether that cynicism was justified. Will it be, as the Exchange chairman says, vigorous strides towards "full electronic trading and order matching"? Or will the grantees echo St Augustine: "Oh Lord, give me order-driven trading — but not yet."

A whimper rather than a big bang

□ WHEN your throat is about to be cut, you do not rush to help to sharpen the knife. Little wonder, then, that the electricity industry is not falling over itself to speed the progress towards open competition in 1998.

PENNINGTON



Only small steps have been taken towards what has been dressed up as a big bang in energy, when the whole of the domestic market will be up for grabs and customers can buy their power from anyone.

Now even Stephen Littlechild, whose job it is to ensure the whole thing happens, has uneasily shuffled his feet and suggested the industry might please — if it can see its way clear — get a move on.

He is anxious to avoid the fiasco of 1994, when the electricity market for large users was opened up to competition in a wholly unprepared fashion, and

the industry stumbled out of bed one day into a whole new world of administrative problems, disrupted power charges and technological inadequacies.

He was criticised then for entering the debate far too late in the day, and he has not learnt. The matter of who will pay for implementing the mechanics of competition has not been settled, even though the bill, estimated at more than £300 million, was supposed to have been assigned by the end of the year. The electricity companies are keen it should not fall to them. Why should their shareholders pay to help other companies to take their business?

The competition in energy is being forced in a way that never happened with telecommunications. Nobody asked BT shareholders to help Mercury on line. If 1998 is going to function well, or indeed happen at all, Professor Littlechild must either find the money from Tim Eggars' pocket, or implement a new electricity licences that de-

mand the companies begin making progress, rather than merely asking them politely to hasten their commercial eclipse.

Granada needs to cast a new spell

□ GERRY ROBINSON may reflect that life is unfair as he mulls over a higher Granada bid for Forte this weekend. Forte's defence has been so drastic that a slimmed down company would have more margin for error than a stretched Granada-cum-Forte. The City, including many institutions with shares in both, seems to prefer the version produced by long-term laggard Forte to that dreamt up by fast-moving winner Granada.

The institutions are now much taken with the option, suggested in this column, of Mr Robinson buying only the catering businesses he knows. Instead he claims blithely that international hotels, like television, require no special expertise and that simple

universal management techniques to cut costs and raise prices will widen margins.

Granada can still step back and aim instead to top the conditional sale of Forte's roadside restaurants and motorway stops to Whitbread. Any such offer is not certain to succeed. Contracts allow Whitbread to share any premium and Granada cannot add Forte's motorway business to its own.

The odds are still on pride requiring a higher bid. But if Mr Robinson really believes that no industry is unique and that his team can weave magic with margins, he could think laterally and buy top contractor Amec's £2 billion-a-year turnover for little more than petty cash.

Common currency

□ AFTER claims that the majority of businessmen think a common Euro-currency a ripping wheeze, the latest dispatch from the surveys front suggests that, indeed, most of the actual public both understand and support the European Union and EMU, partial or not. Where do they find such surveys? In this case, on the pay-roll of something called the European Movement. Which explains a lot.

Morgan Stanley increases its income to \$187m

By PATRICIA TEHAN AND JON ASHWORTH

MORGAN Stanley, the US investment banking giant, increased its net income 58 per cent to \$187 million in the fourth quarter of the year.

The figure compares with \$118 million in the quarter to end-October 1994, since Morgan Stanley changed its year-end from January to November last year.

Net income for the ten-month fiscal year to November 30 was \$600 million, or \$6.96 per common share. Net revenues for the period were \$3.6 billion and fully diluted earnings per share were \$6.65.

Richard Fisher, chairman, said that the strong results followed "a difficult period in 1994". He said investment banking revenue increased thanks to "buoyant mergers and acquisitions markets around the world" and a strong year for underwriting, particularly equity issues.

He said: "We remain committed to our long-term strategy of expanding and enhancing our presence around the world."

Morgan Stanley yesterday sought to distance itself from court action in Luxembourg stemming from the collapse of



Lee: Investigating

a \$120 million offshore fund. A group of investors is suing the bank for alleged gross negligence over valuations provided for The Global Opportunity Fund, to which Morgan Stanley Banque Luxembourg was administrator and custodian.

The fund was managed in London by a firm called InterCapital Asset Management and domiciled in the Cayman Islands. Morgan Stanley in London provided loans to allow investors to gear up their holdings, and made a market in Italian warrants held by fund.

Court proceedings were initiated in December after settlement discussions broke down. The timetable for the case will be spelt out in Luxembourg today. The lawsuit alleges negligence by Morgan Stanley relating principally to the overvaluation of the fund, which collapsed in February 1995 after a series of redemptions by investors.

Rakisons, the London-based law firm, and Bonn & Schmitt, a Luxembourg firm, are acting on behalf of investors, who allege losses of up to \$70 million.

Lee & Allen, a London forensic accounting firm, has been retained to investigate alleged irregularities in the fund.

□ Lehman Brothers, the US financial institution, increased its net income by 50 per cent to \$69 million in the fourth quarter to November after a \$38 million charge for occupancy-related property expenses and severance payments.

The charge was partly offset by a gain of \$47 million on the sale of Lehman's stake in Omnitel Sistemi Radiocellulari Italiani. For the year to November, net income more than doubled from \$113 million to \$242 million on total revenues of \$3.1 billion, up from \$2.7 billion.

Halifax set to expand insurance

Halifax, the UK's largest building society, confirmed yesterday it is prepared to buy a mutual insurance company to enhance its own. Halifax Life, launched a year ago.

A spokesman said: "We know there are a number of opportunities in the marketplace and have looked at some of them. If we do buy anything it will have to be at the right price and fit in with our existing business strategy."

BR signals sale

British Rail has completed the sale of its second signalling and contracting business, Interlogic Control Engineering, to ABB Dainler-Benz Transportation, which rivals GEC-Alsthon as one of Europe's largest rail-equipment businesses. Interlogic employs a total of 420.

Druck ahead

A strong order book, fuelled by a rise in exports, helped pre-tax profits at Druck Holdings, which makes electronic pressure sensors and transducers, to jump 69 per cent to £4.4 million in the six months to September 30. Sales advanced 34 per cent to £22.7 million. The interim dividend is raised to 5p (4.1p), payable on February 19, from earnings per share of 43.1p (26.1p).

Mirror deal

A compensation deal has been struck between Mirror Group newspapers and Nightflight, a distribution service that handled The Independent before Mirror Group bought 43 per cent of the newspaper in 1994. Payment details were not disclosed.

Retailer closer to relisting

By SARAH BAGNALL

ATTEMPTS to rescue Owen & Robinson, the sportswear retailer, took a step forward yesterday when it emerged that a former chairman had paid £5.5 million for a large chunk of the company's debt and shares.

The move clears the way for the company's shares to be relisted after a five-month suspension and ends the company's short-lived involvement

with Philip Green, the flamboyant former head of Amber Day, the discount clothing chain renamed WEW.

Morris Dwek, a former chairman, succeeded in raising funds to acquire the debt and a 16 per cent equity stake in the company from Mr Green.

Mr Green acquired £6 million of the company's debt at a discount from TSB last July. At the same time, he acquired the shares. He is thought to have made a small profit on the deal.

SelectTV decision next week

By ERIC REGULY

PEARSON, the media group that owns the Financial Times and Penguin books, will decide next week whether to bid for SelectTV, the television company that made Lovejoy and Birds of a Feather. A decision to proceed with the £45 million deal is said to hinge on whether it can line up buyers for the parts of SelectTV it does not want.

Pearson wants SelectTV's library and

production arm, but not its cable channel or its 15 per cent interest in Meridian Broadcasting.

MAI, the ITV company that already owns 61 per cent of Meridian, is the logical buyer for the stake. Carlton Broadcasting, owner of the London weekday franchise, has been in talks with Pearson to buy SelectTV's cable channel, but is unlikely to commit itself unless it can find a distribution outlet for the channel.



United Utilities

Pretty soon, you won't need an advertisement to tell you who United Utilities are.

It is our aim to represent, on an international stage, the best in British industry.

Who are we?

You probably remember that last November North West Water PLC acquired Norweb PLC.

Shortly those names will cease to exist on the Stock Exchange.

On the 1st January 1996 an exciting new name appeared.

United Utilities.

It is the UK's first multi-utility company. Comprised of water, electricity, gas and telecommunications.

If a company of this stature was launched in America there would be a ticker-tape parade.

Today, the world.

Internationally the opportunities are very exciting indeed. United Utilities already has the strength and expertise to compete globally.

In the USA we have forged a strategic alliance with Bechtel, one of the world's largest construction companies.

This partnership, which allows us to bid for and win worldwide contracts, is called International Water.

World Bank figures confirm that internationally there are business opportunities for utility companies worth more than \$600 Billion.

Take water for example.

Only 2% of the world's waste water benefits from any kind of treatment.

And only 30% of the world's population has the luxury of drinking water from a tap.

Wouldn't you like a British company to compete for that business?

Strength and depth.

North West Water is the third biggest water company in the world.

Serving 7 million people in the UK and perhaps more surprisingly, we have contracts to serve 21 million people worldwide.

It is rated by OFWAT as the nation's most efficient water company.

With the biggest environmental improvement

UNITED UTILITIES PLC. DAWSON HOUSE, GREAT SANKEY, WARRINGTON, WA5 3LW.

programme and the third lowest water charges.

Norweb on the other hand is the lowest cost provider of electricity in the UK.

Its electrical retailing arm has embraced the whole country. It is now the third biggest.

And it might surprise you to learn that it is also a telecommunications company and a provider of gas, supplying 3000 industrial sites throughout the UK.

A perfect marriage.

With North West Water and Norweb there was true synergy. Two utilities companies in the same geographical area.

While as individual businesses they were certainly successful, together, as one force they will be unbeatable.

Of course, between them, North West Water and Norweb have a good deal of heritage.

Which is why both will continue to trade under these names.

Everyone benefits.

The company as a whole will bring together common services to provide greater efficiency.

Which, for 7 million people in the UK, will mean a higher standard of service and a progressive reduction in water and electricity costs.

We'll also be continuing with the ground breaking rebate scheme pioneered by North West Water.

The savings made from the greater efficiency of the company are shared with customers and shareholders.

And, for our shareholders, we are committed to providing a healthy return on their investment.

A bright future.

Bringing together North West Water and Norweb to form one bigger and stronger utilities company will benefit our customers.

It will benefit our shareholders.

It will benefit our employees.

And as a British company, competing and winning on the world stage, it will benefit the economy too.

We're ready to take on the world.

YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME AN INSTANT MILLIONAIRE



10,000 Lottery tickets to be won

First prize in the Lottery could now be as much as £40 million and The Times has entered 10,000 tickets in Saturday's draw for readers to win, for an even better chance of hitting the jackpot. Our prizes will be allocated like this:

One first prize of 5,000 £1 tickets

Five runners-up prizes of 1,000 £1 tickets

The Times will hold the randomly generated numbers on computer which will work out if any are winners. If they are, the readers who won Times tickets will be contacted. Every day we are publishing a competition question and you can enter as many times as you wish. Today's question is:

How many times can the Lottery jackpot roll over?

a) three times b) six times c) an unlimited number

Phone your answer daily on the number below, open 24 hours, and until 3pm on Saturday. All correct answers to this week's questions go into the draw and winners will be randomly selected. Normal Times Newspapers rules apply. Names of last week's winners will appear on Saturday.

PHONE YOUR ANSWER ON: 0891 40 50 49

Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times

plant to boost British Steel output

pulls ahead

placing backed

ent sells again

Merrydown swap

ue Bird purchase

LA expels member

dimizu invests in W

an car mark

Save up to 30% on your home insurance

28 28 20

Guardian

Guardian

Deportation order boosts defence companies shares

SHARES with a defence bias received a lift after the Home Office issued a deportation order to a leading Saudi Arabian dissident who has been a thorn in the side of British-Saudi relations for some time.

The move is said to have been prompted by pressures from the Riyadh regime, the US Government and British arms companies.

City analysts said the order to deport Mohammed al-Masari, a Saudi Arabian dissident who is head of an influential London-based Islamic opposition group, will boost hopes of those bidding for major Middle East contracts. There were gains for those expected to be the main beneficiaries, with British Aerospace, also helped by a Merrill Lynch recommendation and recent orders for the Airbus consortium in which it is a partner, up 18p to 306p.

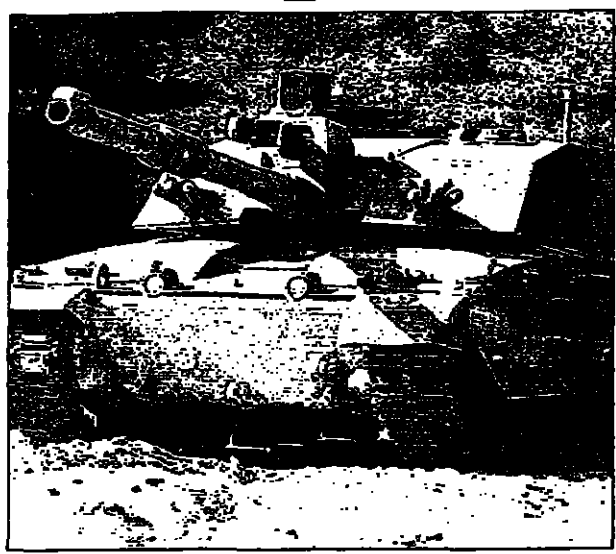
GECC 8p to 350p, GKN 11p to 79p, and Vickers, which is hoping to win orders for Challenger tanks, 2p stronger at 25p.

Meanwhile, leading shares paused for breath after Wednesday's Wall Street-inspired advance, though a firm bond market and numerous special situations driven by bid speculation and broker recommendations kept secondary issues alive.

The market was not affected by news that Michael Lawrence was forced to resign as chief executive of the London Stock Exchange after the Exchange's board lost confidence in him. The City views his departure as a setback for those hoping to see order-driven demand.

A positive start on Wall Street had little impact on sentiment in late London trading. The FT-SE 100 index traded in a narrow range, but touched a new intra-day trading high of 3,723.0 before ending down 1.5 at 3,714.1. Second-liners enjoyed a better run, with the FT-SE Mid 250 volume rising 17.5 to 4,071.4. Volume reached 735.2 million shares.

British Airways soared 18p higher to 488p, on volume of 11.2 million shares, after UBS upgraded its profit forecasts for the next two years and moved its recommendation on the stock from hold to buy. Richard Hannah at UBS has increased his current year pre-tax profit estimate for the year to March 31 by £10 million to



The Home Office move should help Challenger tank orders

£80 million, with next year's forecast raised by £40 million to £660 million.

Mr Hannah attributes the upgrades to better-than-expected volume growth and less pessimism about pressures on the pricing side.

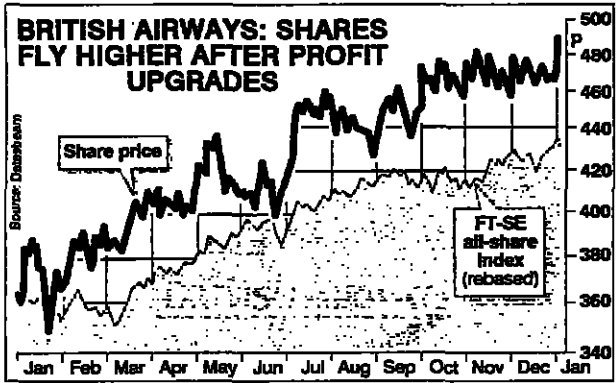
Courtauld added 15p to 432p, with the shares boosted by a positive note from SBC Warburg, but RTZ eased 6p to

National Power dimmed 8p to 52p, with talk that Goldman Sachs was leading a switch out of the UK generators, but the Scottish generators benefited as Credit Lyonnais Laing recommended Scottish Hydro, up 7p to 367p, and Scottish Power, ahead 9p to 384p.

913p after a Kleinwort Benson downgrade.

British Steel saw the biggest percentage rise among FT-SE stocks, hardening 6p to 168p, or 4.2 per cent, on heavy volume of 15.3 million shares, on the back of firmer steel prices in the United States.

US selling and UK buying resulted in Hanson rising 6p to 203p, on heavy



volume of 20.8 million shares traded — the day's biggest individual volume.

Forté eased 1p to 342p, on the growing expectation that it will fend off Granada's hostile £3.3 billion bid, though there was also disappointment that the television to leisure group has not yet come up with an increased offer. The City has given a largely positive reac-

to-rentals group 50p higher to £15.88, with some brokers saying that the stock will be worth £19 a share after the proposed merger of its music and rentals businesses later in the year.

Back on the profits warning front, Jacques Vert was the day's biggest casualty as shares in the fashion group dived 60p to 115p after it accompanied a slump in after-half profits with a warning about second-half trading.

Water stocks, recently hit by fears about compensation to customers with interrupted supply, rallied, though the impact of burst pipes after the freeze hit many of the insurers. The insurance sector, recently buoyed by bid speculation, was depressed as estimates emerged that the sector is facing a £500 million bill for damage caused by the burst pipes in the North and Scotland. Commercial Union lost 12p to 610p, General Accident 7p to 385p, Royal Insurance 7p to 385p, GRE 7p to 267p and Sun Alliance 7p to 369p.

Bid speculation helped to fuel rises for many in the life assurance sector. Refuge gained 14p to 485p, Britannia 14p to 813p and London and Manchester, squeezed higher by speculative talk that the Halifax Building Society or Liverpool Victoria may bid, added 8p to 423p.

Elsewhere, bid speculation helped Vaux Group to climb 8p to 278p, with Bupa, up 4p to 72p, still seen as the favourite to launch a bid for the Sunderland-based brewing to Swallow Hotels and nursing homes group.

□ GILT-EDGED: A brighter outlook for interest rates and inflation helped gilts to shake off some of the recent political uncertainties. Sentiment was also boosted by an unchanged German repo rate and firmer US Treasuries.

The March long gilt future rose 22 ticks to £1107.25, on volume of 56,000 contracts. The rise prompted the Government to sell a bit more of the index-linked tax. Among conventional stocks, short-dated issues added £1, while gains among longer-dated stocks stretched to £4 and index-linked climbed £3.16.

□ NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average remained firm at midday, gaining 15.4 points to 5,209.61, helped by hopes of a US budget agreement. Declining issues led advances six to five.

London: FT 30 3714.1 (+1.5) FTSE 100 3714.1 (+1.5) FTSE Mid 250 4071.4 (+17.5) FTSE 1000 4071.4 (+17.5) FTSE Europe 100 1535.57 (+1.35) FT A-Share 1817.55 (+1.59) FT Non Financials 1918.84 (+2.03) FT Financials 114.18 (+1.03) FT Govt Secs 95.64 (+0.36) Bagnall 32.58 SEAO Volume 725.15 USA (Daxcom) 188.46 (+0.26) USA 1.5492 (-0.0018) German Mark 2.2596 (+0.0017) Exchange Index 84.02 (+0.04) Bank of England official close (Hopt) 1.1893 ECU 1.0468 ECU 1.0468 149.8 Nov (2.1%) Jan 1997-100 RFX 149.8 Nov (2.9%) Jan 1997-100

Frankfurt: DAX 2324.32 (+4.93) Singapore: Straits 2365.14 (+88.93) Brussels: General 8622.48 (+63.05) Paris: CAC-40 1091.21 (+11.75) Zurich: SKA Gen 735.50 (+7.93)

London: FT 30 3714.1 (+1.5) FTSE 100 3714.1 (+1.5) FTSE Mid 250 4071.4 (+17.5) FTSE 1000 4071.4 (+17.5) FTSE Europe 100 1535.57 (+1.35) FT A-Share 1817.55 (+1.59) FT Non Financials 1918.84 (+2.03) FT Financials 114.18 (+1.03) FT Govt Secs 95.64 (+0.36) Bagnall 32.58 SEAO Volume 725.15 USA (Daxcom) 188.46 (+0.26) USA 1.5492 (-0.0018) German Mark 2.2596 (+0.0017) Exchange Index 84.02 (+0.04) Bank of England official close (Hopt) 1.1893 ECU 1.0468 ECU 1.0468 149.8 Nov (2.1%) Jan 1997-100 RFX 149.8 Nov (2.9%) Jan 1997-100

Cash Con Ind 25 ... Century Ind 118 ... Com de Part Fin 151 ... Cornwell 113 ... Cox Insurance 113 ... Crown Products 53 ... Dmatak 75 ... Finbury Tech (100) 106 + 2 ... Gearhouse Gp (200) 200 ... Jupiter Split Cap 87 ... Jupiter Split Inc 89 ... Jupiter Split US 89 ... Marix & Oseas 22 + 2 ... National Grid (204) 199 + 1 ... Northern Petroleum 75 ... Nihon Petrol 8 ... Pet City 398 + 3 ... Polypharm Pharms Rev Recyclidly 148 + 2 ... Rushmore Wynne 3 ... Unicom Ind (133) 140 ... Vectra 260 ... Viewline 135 ... Wilmington 67 ...

Ransomes n/p (48) 7 - 1 SWP Group n/p (24) 1 - 1 Sundtite Spk n/p (25) 3 - 1 Westbury n/p (150) 21 - 1

RISES: Cons Murchison 137p (+13p) Br Borneo 369p (+20p) Geest 203p (+10p) Caley Allen 440p (+21p) Scotia 584p (+21p) Courtaulds 432p (+15p) Br Land 402p (+16p)

FALLS: Montagu 160p (-20p) Calor Gas 244p (-12p) Chiroscience 312p (-15p) Ferguson Int 210p (-10p) Filtronic Com 450p (-20p) Bloomsbury Int 495p (-20p) Enterprise 584p (-13p) Rangor 405p (-13p)

Closing Prices Page 25

rose 22 ticks to £1027.23, on volume of 56,000 contracts. The rise prompted the Government to sell a bit more of the index-linked tap. Among conventional stocks, shorter-dated issues added ½, while gains among longer-dated stocks stretched to 1½ and index-linked dimmed ½.	RISSES:
□ NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average remained firm at midday, gaining 15.4 points to 5,209.61, helped by hopes of a US budget agreement. Declining issues led advances six to five.	Corn Murchison 137p (+13p)
	Br Barrow 369p (+20p)
	Geece 203p (+10p)
	Cater Allen 446p (+20p)
	Scotta 564p (+21p)
	Courtauld 432p (+15p)
	Br Land 402p (+12p)
	FALLS:
	Montague 160p (-20p)
	Calor Gap 244p (-12p)
	Chlorochemie 312p (-15p)
	Ferguson Int'l 210p (-10p)
	Filtronix Com 450p (-20p)
	Bloomsint Int'l 495p (-20p)
	Enterprise 384p (-13p)
	Ranger 405p (-10p)

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THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Could this
be for YOU?

IF YOU'RE determined it's going to be YOU who is going to win tomorrow's National Lottery jackpot, then a new savings account from the Newcastle Building Society, offering an interest rate of 6.9 per cent, could appeal.

Direct 50 clearly is designed for YOU — the seriously rich. To open the postal account requires a minimum deposit of £100,000 and 50 days' notice is needed to make a withdrawal, so that should curb the temptation to spend, spend, spend.

Gracious loser

ALGY CLUFF yesterday proved just what an officer and a gentleman he is. The takeover of his Cluff Resources mining group was declared unconditional in the morning by bidder Ashanti Goldfields, and by noon Cluff had penned a letter to Ashanti's chief executive Sam Jonah to congratulate him. Algy will be under contract to Cluff's new owners for at least a year. However if, in time, Algy spurns Cluff Two and starts all over again, 1, for one, would not be surprised.

Lloyd's or Lloyds

IT SEEMS that both Lloyd's of London and the clearing banks need to give some lessons to the Labour Party. In discussing the Education (Student Loans) Bill, Maria Pye, Labour MP for Glasgow, Maryhill, asked the committee chairman if three Conservative MPs, apparently members of Lloyd's, should declare an interest "because their bank may possibly be involved". Nicholas Baker, MP for North Dorset, put Mrs Pye right. "The hon lady talks about her ignorance. I assure her that Lloyd's is the underwriters are not the same as Lloyds Bank."



"The water compensation has arrived"

Gilt warning

IMRO, as part of its brief to ensure investors are fully aware of what they are investing in yesterday issued a new set of disclosure requirements governing unit trusts and the like. Paragraph 34 of the document starkly illustrates how times have changed. This requires that specific mention be made if more than 35 per cent of the portfolio consists, or is likely to consist, of gilt. The new IMRO regulation is detailed under the heading "Risk Warnings".

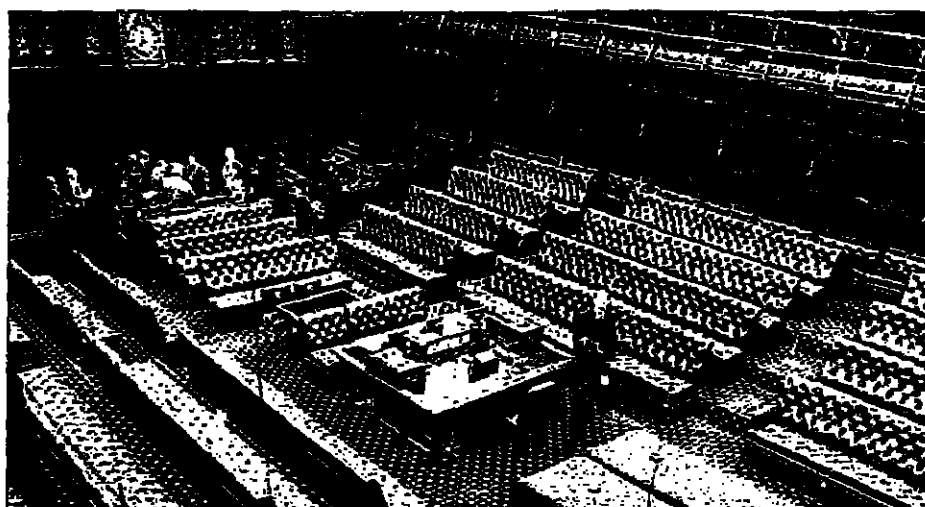
Bigger splash

YOU won't find Thames Water chiefs out there with a bucket and mop in hand helping to end the misery of burst water pipes. Instead, they are getting on with their business — in England and in India. Thames came through the summer without any water restrictions, and if there are any current weather problems then they are modest. That leaves Thames time to lend a hand to India where water problems can be a health problem. Thames told the Westminster Review: "We have already started work in Bombay on a project which should double the supply of water there, and we are hopeful of winning a lot more contracts."

COLIN CAMPBELL

Companies that hanker after a lord on the board

Frank Leduc
on why peers
have become
a valuable
business asset



The House of Lords has turned into a valuable recruiting ground for British companies



Lord Hanson, left, a successful life peer, and Viscount Blakenham who inherited his title



The Duke of Westminster, left, a City director, and Lord Ashburton, a former chairman of BP

Peers have never been in greater demand to lend the boardroom a little bit of class and nowhere more so than in banks and transport companies. A survey of Britain's 250 largest listed companies, for *The Times* by Pensions Investment Research Consultants (PIRC) found that 134 peers were directors of 88 companies. Remarkable, given that there are fewer than 1,200 peers. The pool of available boardroom talent reduces considerably if the archbishops and bishops are excluded, together with members of the Government, Opposition, law lords and those who have already retired from the business world.

Many of the companies who appoint lords are world leaders so it is puzzling that they appear to hanker for a bygone age. Anne Simpson, joint managing director of PIRC, said: "It may well give added gravitas to the board, but gravitas does not equal competence. The tradition of appointing those who will grace the headed notepaper isn't necessarily something our competitors would understand. Boards aren't mantelpieces to display decorative objects. The directors should all be there through merit, hard work and ability."

The status of a duke or viscount is seen by some companies as an asset when trying to win foreign contracts, or if potential clients include social climbers or the easily awed. Those businesses dependent on government contracts may like to have someone on their side who is well-versed in the ways of Whitehall and Westminster, and who has useful contacts — in many cases former ministers or civil servants.

Ms Simpson said that while some peers were successful businessmen who had been ennobled in recognition of their achievements, others were appointed by companies "in the hope that this is going to give them some additional sway with the Government". The PIRC survey found that two sectors, banking and transport, which are closely affected by government policies, had a particularly high proportion of lords on the board.

Sceptics say that the bestowal of a peerage on a chairman or chief executive sometimes follows donations to a political party. The coincidence (in statistical terms) of honours and political donations was highlighted in an *Investors Chronicle* report last summer. Patrick Toohy, the author, said: "Between 1979 and 1982,

only 6 per cent of all public companies gave to the Conservative cause, yet half the peers created in these three years were directors of these few companies."

One thing that can be said about the seventh Earl of Anywhere or the fifth Lord Nobody is that, by succeeding to their titles, there can be no suspicion that they obtained them in anything other than honourable circumstances.

Equally, faulting the educational background of such peers would be hard. The majority of the 770 hereditary peers had highly expensive educations with Eton predominating. And the majority went on to Oxford or Cambridge. Only from among the ranks of Britain's 400 life peers is one likely to find a lord who went to a state school or a redbrick university. And even among life peers, a significant number

are ex-public school or Oxbridge graduates or both. But not Lord Sheppard of Didgmore. Typical of the self-made man, he rose from humble origins in the East End of London to become chairman of Grand Metropolitan, the international food and drinks group.

Lord Hanson's background was hardly one of grinding poverty. He started out running a family transport business before establishing one of the biggest deal-making conglomerates of the 20th century. Viscount Blakenham, chairman of Pearson, the media and entertainment group that owns the *Financial Times* and Penguin Books, inherited his title. He is a member of the Pearson family that founded the business and still has a stake. He once said: "I have never thought of myself as an aristocrat. My father was a

politician who was made a peer." This gentle, understated man ignores the fact that his paternal grandfather was the fourth Earl of Listowel. His maternal grandfather was the second Lord Cowdray — the Pearson connection. And one of his great-grandfathers was the second Lord Derwent.

Lord Blakenham has also said: "I like to think I would be running something else if it were not for the family connection." Educated at Eton and Harvard, and with a career that has not been confined to the family firm, his view is probably accurate. It seems unlikely that one could command a seat at the top table of one of Britain's biggest companies — and for so long — without a certain degree of ability.

Viscount Blakenham is not the only director of a newspaper publishing company to

have ink mingled with the blue blood coursing through his veins. Others include Viscount Rothermere, chairman of the Daily Mail and General Trust, and Lord Hartwell, who stepped down this week at the Telegraph.

The Baring family did more than furnish the boardroom of Baring Brothers, Britain's oldest bank, which was rescued by ING, the Dutch company, after Nick Leeson brought it down. Directors among the present generation of five lords with the surname Baring include: the Earl of Cromer (Inchcape); Lord Howick of Glendale (Northern Rock Building Society); and Lord Ashburton, who retired as chairman of BP last year.

Two chairmen of J Sainsbury since 1956, who served 34 years between them, were Lord Sainsbury and his son Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover.

The majority of hereditary peers who run a business, however, control a private holding company with the aim of earning a decent return on the family's assets. The Duke of Westminster, for example, a director of Sun Alliance and one of Britain's wealthiest people is also a director of Grosvenor Estate Holdings, which runs his London property interests.

A relatively new strand of boardroom lord is the retired politician.

An increasing number are taking up lucrative posts in the City after retiring from ministerial office. Many of them preached from the gospel of free enterprise during the Eighties, although few, if any, of their appointments to company boards followed an open, visible and competitive selection process.

Does it matter? Ms Simpson is quick to point out that the quality of those who run companies is significant for UK plc and for those they employ in increasingly competitive and global markets.

Ms Simpson believes that companies should introduce nomination committees instead of "quaint medieval appointments". She said: "What we want to see is a transparent approach. That shouldn't exclude the embroiled, offspring, relatives or friends, but they should have to compete with everyone else."

"The issue really is Britain having to operate in an extremely competitive international environment. Where are the brightest and best going to come from? The House of Lords is not necessarily the first port of call."

Take cover to fight those hostile bids

Insurance can help to ease the cost of a takeover battle, Sarah Bagnall finds

As corporate Britain braces itself for another year of frenzied bid battles, potential targets may want to consider insuring themselves against the cost of defending an unwelcome approach. Last year more than £70 billion worth of takeovers and mergers were completed and all the indications point towards an equally busy 1996.

Fighting off a bid is not cheap. The cost of the necessary array of merchant bankers, lawyers, accountants and public relations experts can run into tens of millions of pounds — a bill that his earnings per share and can seriously deplete a company's cash resources.

As soon as a bidder has swooped on his prey, the victim collects advisers, which can include management consultants, such as Boston Consulting, and defensive agencies, such as Kroll Associates. The rule of thumb used by the City to calculate the average cost of a company's defence is 0.8 per cent of the value of the bid. For smaller companies, with market values of up to £100 million, the percentage rises to 1.5 to 2 per cent.

Apply this formula to Granada's £32 billion hostile bid for Fortis and the latter's defence could cost £25.6 million, while Amec's successful defence against a £360 million bid from Kvaerner could have cost about £29 million. *Acquisitions Monthly* estimates that last year's deals netted nearly £1 billion worth of fees for external advisers.

Imagine then that these defence costs could be recovered if the advances of an unwelcome suitor were successfully thwarted. Well, they can. TOI Corporate Services, an arm of Swire Fraser, the Lloyd's broker, offers takeover insurance to cover defence costs.

Sandra Ringsell, a former corporate financier who set up TOI in 1990, says: "At the moment, we are covering about 100 companies — about 3 per cent of the

companies on the Stock Exchange."

The cover costs between 3.5 and 6 per cent of the sum assured, depending on the target's perceived risk of a takeover bid and its ability to successfully defend itself. As a result, if a company spent £1,750 it could recoup costs of up to £50,000 and a premium of £70,000 could lead to the recovery of fees of up to £2 million.

The cover lasts 15 months, but if a bid is made in the first three months no claim can be made. Miss Ringsell believes the investment is worth making. "Besides incurring substantial professional fees, a bid can have a detrimental impact on a company's cash flow, its borrowing capabilities and its earnings per share." Furthermore, companies financially weakened by a hostile bid are more vulnerable to a second onslaught. The earnings impact is a result of the accounting standard FRSS, which since June 1994 has required companies to deduct defence costs from pre-tax profits.

The odds of being the subject of a takeover bid are short

The odds of being the subject of a takeover bid are surprisingly short. Last year, TOI estimated that in the years 1990 to 1994 a quoted company had a one in four chance of being acquired. And those companies most concerned about falling prey to a hostile bid are in the engineering sector. The next most cautious sectors are electronics and electrical equipment, household goods, printing and paper and packaging and retailers and distributors.

However, the most cautious are not necessarily the most likely to be targeted. TOI reckons the sectors most likely in the firing line this year are telecommunications, food manufacturers, chemicals, insurance, paper, packaging and printing, pharmaceuticals, and the drinks industry.

So paranoid chief executives want to ensure they can afford to mount the defence of all defences should consider taking out a policy.

BRADFORD & BINGLEY'S NEW RATES OF INTEREST EFFECTIVE FROM 7 JANUARY 1996

Account	Balance	Annual Interest		Monthly Interest	
		Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.	Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.
Account Monthly Saver (Premium Rate)*	£10+	7.00	5.25	-	-
First Choice* (including Bonus)	£50+	1.25	0.94	-	-
	£500+	3.05	2.29	-	-
	£1,000+	4.60	3.40	-	-
	£2,500+	6.05	4.49	-	-
	£5,000+	7.55	5.58	3.45	2.59
	£10,000+	9.05	6.67	4.80	3.60
	£25,000+	10.55	7.76	6.15	4.50
	£50,000+	12.05	8.85	7.50	5.40
	£100,000+	13.55	9.94	8.85	6.30
Premier Deposit*	£1+	0.25	0.19	-	-
	£100+	0.75	0.56	-	-
	£1,000+	1.25	0.94	-	-
	£5,000+	2.75	2.01	-	-
	£25,000+	4.25	3.08	-	-
Privilege Bond	£1,000+	5.55	4.16	5.55	4.01
	£25,000+	6.05	4.54	5.85	4.39
	£50,000+	6.55	4.92	6.15	4.66
	£100,000+	7.05	5.30	6.45	4.94

ACCOUNTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO NEW INVESTORS

Account	Balance	Annual Interest		Monthly Interest	
		Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.	Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.
One Month Notice	£1+	2.55	1.91	2.50	1.88
	£2,500+	3.10	2.33	3.00	2.25
	£5,000+	4.05	3.04	3.90	2.93
	£10,000+	4.55	3.41	4.40	3.30
Bonus (inc. full bonus)	£1,000+	3.30	2.48	-	-
	£10,000+	4.30	3.25	-	-
	£25,000+	4.80	3.60	3.95	2.96
Matured Variable Bond and Renewal Bond	£50+	0.30	0.23	0.30	0.23
	£500+	2.30	1.73	2.30	1.73
	£1,000+	2.80	2.14	2.80	2.14
	£10,000+	3.30	2.48	3.30	2.48
	£25,000+	3.80	2.89	3.80	2.89
Maturity Bond	£5,000+	5.55	4.16	5.55	4.01
	£25,000+	6.05	4.54	5.85	4.39
	£50,000+	6.55	4.92	6.15	4.66
Annual	£10,000+	5.15	3.86	4.85	3.71
	£50,000+	5.65	4.16	5.35	4.01

*Interest rates are variable and are subject to change without notice. Net equivalent rates are calculated on the basis of a 12 month period. Net rates are based on the assumption that the account is held for 12 months. For details of other accounts please visit our website or call 0800 222 222. For details of other accounts please visit our website or call 0800 222 222. For details of other accounts please visit our website or call 0800 222 222.

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Paul Durman weighs up the wonder drugs

Biotechnology's air of mystery

After a long, steep climb last year, shares in Britain's biotechnology companies are showing signs of running out of breath. A handful of directors selling shares and some sceptical newspaper comment has deflated the bubble of optimism that reached its height last month after extremely positive results from clinical trials of marimastat, British Biotech's cancer drug.

Many investors feel uneasy trying to make sense of these strange companies without profits or even marketable products. The discoveries of molecular biology and biochemistry may enable biotech companies to develop new wonder drugs, but it is extremely difficult to distinguish between likely winners and those pumping money into fruitless research.

Bill Pike, national life sciences partner of Ernst & Young, said: "If you go to a casino someone can tell you what the odds are. In biotechnology, people are playing a game where they don't know the odds in the casino." The gambling imagery is reinforced by the seemingly extravagant values forecast for biotech companies by the City. By December some analysts reckon that shares in British Biotech, which quadrupled to more than £16 last year, could be worth £35 or more, putting a £2 billion market value on a company with sales of only £5 million.

Ian White, a Flemings analyst, said British Biotech's share price would be justified if marimastat took just 1 per cent of the market for cancer drugs — £300 million a year. He believes the chances of some form of the drug reaching the market already exceed 90 per cent. With most of the hopes based on initial results from a small clinical trial, it is not hard to find sceptics who regard the sector as over-hyped. But at least the City is trying to get to grips with the valuation problem.



Peter Doyle: "Slender evidence"

Most analysts are using discounted cashflow models. For each drug, they estimate potential future sales of an effective and safe product, and then allow for the current stage of development. The rule of thumb is that in phase 1 (safety-testing) trials, a drug has only a 10-20 per cent chance of reaching the market. Successful phase 2 trials (on sick patients) lift the chances to better than 50 per cent, which will rise to more than 75 per cent by the end of the large phase 3 trials.

From these calculations, analysts can estimate a biotech company's future revenues and hence its value. This is then discounted back, at a rate that supposedly allows for the risks, to produce a present value. Mr Pike said that the elegance of the models was overwhelmed by the critical importance of the assumptions. But although the discounted cashflow approach is highly subjective, there is currently no better alternative. As Erling Refsum at Yamaichi conced-

ed: "Basically, it's a guess. If the numbers start looking so ludicrous that you risk looking a bit of an idiot, then you stick on a higher discount rate. You fudge... because the whole thing is a fudge." What matters, he said, is the way in which forecasts move as analysts recalculate figures when news emerges.

Dr Refsum is still predicting big rises this year from British Biotech, Scotts Holdings, Chiroscience, Coriis International and Oxford Molecular. At around £200 million, British Biotech's market value puts it among the world's leading biotech companies, on a par with Biogen Idec, the Canadian company that has won approval for the AIDS drug 3TC.

Zeneca, the UK drugs company, has recently increased the amount it invests on partnerships with biotech companies. Peter Doyle, the Zeneca director responsible for research and development, expressed surprise at some of the optimism in the UK. "The market has attributed values to companies and products on rather slender evidence," he said.

Few doubt the future importance of biotechnology; leading pharmaceutical groups are increasingly reliant on the biotech industry to supplement their drug pipelines. John Savin, analyst at Greig Middleton, the broker, said fund managers had to realise the scale of the rewards offered by biotech companies.

Shares in the leading companies could still rise another eight or ten times if they deliver on their promises. An investment in British Biotech might have a 50 per cent downside, but a 1,000 per cent upside. The problems of analysis, and the importance of sentiment, mean that share prices in the sector will remain volatile. As ever with the stock market, it is often better to travel than to arrive.

THE FINES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION

[illegible]

Shares pause for breath

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	2960	2961	2962	2963	2964	2965	2966	2967	2968	2969	2970	2971	2972	2973	2974	2975	2976	2977	2978	2979	2980	2981	2982	2983	2984	2985	2986	2987	2988	2989	2990	2991	2992	2993	2994	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FILM 1

Showgirls may trade on its sexual content, but eroticism is a whole different game



FILM 2

Crash course in Latin: the National Film Theatre presents a season of Mexican cinema

THE TIMES
ARTS



MUSIC

At the Wigmore Hall the Lindsay Quartet are in superb form to launch their Beethoven cycle



TOMORROW

George Burns, with quip and cigar ever present, prepares to celebrate his 100th birthday

Carnal or merely banal?

As Hollywood's latest sexploitation film opens in Britain, Nicola Venning doubts the appeal of cinematic sex without a story

Sex fascinates. Sex sells. That is why it will always be a stock ingredient of movies, especially bad movies, where a gratuitous display of flesh may be used as a diversionary tactic to draw attention away from deficiencies in other departments.

During the past decade, however, many observers believe that celluloid sex has become too violent, too explicit, too perverse. And a film released in Britain next week seems to confirm the worst fears of the puritans. *Showgirls*, directed by Paul Verhoeven, combines a dollop of tacky sexual content with true Hollywood cynicism. It is an all-singing, all-dancing, all-nude (more or less) blockbuster, set in the clubs and casinos of Las Vegas, and concerning the naked ambition (as it were) of a dancer.

Its infancy has, of course, preceded it, just as its makers hoped. This week *Showgirls* was banned by the Irish film censor, who objected to the morality of the film and its explicit scenes. Abbey Films, which is releasing the film in Ireland, is appealing against the decision. In Britain, the film carries an 18 certificate after minor cuts; elsewhere in Europe it is being released uncut.

With *Showgirls*, Verhoeven takes a familiar *Star is Born* formula and crudely subverts it by focusing on the sordid life of a young stripper and "lap-dancer". The film is, then, the perfect excuse to reveal acres of female flesh. But is there anything new here? Nudity is part of the Hollywood commercial tradition, and has been exploited since men first made moving pictures. Sex is the one element that defies poor reviews

It is the French who excel at portraying sexuality

and is guaranteed to pull in the punters.

Kim Basinger's sultry, sinister affair with Mickey "Will you do this for me?" Rourke in Adrian Lyne's *Nine 1/2 Weeks* (1985) fuelled a runaway box-office hit despite mediocre write-ups. Michael Douglas's dangerous adultery with Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction* (1987) — also directed by Lyne — only confirmed the pull of perverse pleasures. Nothing, it transpired, was a bigger turn-on than an intensely illicit affair and a scorned violent woman.

In fact the only real surprise about *Showgirls* is that, for all its provocative hype, it has not been a big success in America. Despite Verhoeven's history of sexploitation hits — he is

the director who gave us *Basic Instinct* (1992) — the feeling is that he has stumbled badly with this one.

First, *Showgirls* lacks major stars, whereas *Basic Instinct* featured Douglas and Sharon Stone, who famously uncrossed her knickerless limbs and earned herself a small footnote in cinematic history. But, more importantly, *Basic Instinct*'s explicit sexual content was contained within a taut thriller. Lose the story among the sex (as *Showgirls* seems to have done) and everything falls apart.

Perhaps *Showgirls* will only prove the old adage when it comes to erotic titillation, less is very definitely more. Some of the sexiest film scenes ever made have actually shown precious little flesh: think of the sexual charge when Madeleine Carroll removed her wet stockings while handcuffed to Robert Donat in Hitchcock's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.



The naked and the dead duck: Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls* has attracted masses of free publicity but has been a conspicuous flop at the American box-office

Subtlety, though, is not modern Hollywood's forte. It is hard to think of many recent American movies that are erotic in a restrained manner. Perhaps romantic comedies come closest: the fully clothed Meg Ryan faking an orgasm in the restaurant scene in *When Harry Met Sally* was, for many men, quite a turn-on.

On the whole, eroticism is probably done best by the Europeans, although some of their sexiest efforts never leave the arthouse. Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, for instance, was a sexy film by any standards. The sensual Helen Mirren embarks on an affair with Alan Howard under the nose of her boorish husband, Michael Gambon. Suspense, danger, lust: a potent combination.

It is the French, however, who excel at portraying sexuality — erotically,

comically, romantically. Classics such as Buñuel's *Belle de Jour* (1967) with Catherine Deneuve as the demure whoring housewife, or Eric Rohmer's delightful story of sexual politics, *Pauline at the Beach* (1982) and the more recent *Hairdresser's Husband* (Patrice Leconte, 1990), a divinely erotic film about a scatty hairdresser's obsession for Arab music and salon sex (usually while cutting someone's hair), are all part of a uniquely Gallic approach that is both disarmingly frank and erotically compelling.

Following this tradition is the recent French arthouse success, *Gazon Maudit*, which opens here on March 1. This small-budget French sex comedy stars the kooky Victoria Abril (of Almodóvar's *Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down*) in a story that touches on regions of bisexuality unexplored

even by regulars of *Brookside*. The film was written and directed by the gay comedian Josiane Balasko and has been a huge hit in France. Loli (Abril), disenchanted with her philandering husband, finds herself embarking on an affair with a woman — Balasko's itinerant traveller, Marijo. As she glides from a heterosexual to a homosexual relationship, the comic ramifications multiply. Desire runs through the film like an electric current, but there is no graphic sex. The film is endlessly entertaining — and with little more revealed than a passing buttock or two. There are surely lessons here for the makers of *Showgirls*. "Don't show, girls" might be a better motto for those trying to create great celluloid sex.

● *Showgirls* will be reviewed next Thursday, and is released on Friday

words for its emotional portrait of Frida Kahlo, wife of the painter Diego Rivera and lover of Leon Trotsky, while Felipe Cazals's *Solitary* (1975) — an adaptation of José Revueltas's novel about the life of prisoners — is so powerful in its atmospheric evocation of oppression and brutality that the prison in which it was set (and in which Revueltas was himself incarcerated) was closed as a result.

Directors like these set the stage for prize-winning contemporary cineastes who have established Mexican film on the international map. The Mexican cinema season closes with screenings of films such as Maria Novara's *Danzón* (1991) — a bittersweet musical fable that explores the follies of romantic delusion in a Mexico City telephone operator — and *Chirinos* (1993), a stylishly original vampire movie which has made its director, Guillermo del Toro, one of the most sought-after new names in Hollywood. New films like these pay tribute to the energy and diversity of one of Mexico's most representative cultural treasures.

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON

● The Mexican Cinema Season is at the NFT (0171-928 3535) from Tues to Feb 18. Highlights of the season will subsequently be shown in the British Film Institute's regional film theatres



A scene from Fernando de Fuentes's ground-breaking *Let's Go With Pancho Villa!*

Emilio Fernández's weepy melodrama *Abandoned Women* (1944). However, it was the exiled Spaniard Luis Buñuel who, settling in Mexico in 1940, really opened up the nation's cinema to international devel-

opments. Three of his works are to be shown: *The Young and the Damned* (1950), *El* (1952) and *Nazarín* (1958), all craftily subverting previously established Mexican genres and stars.

The new cinematic possibili-

ties which he revealed are explored next month, when the festival gets more up-to-date, screening the works of the leading Mexican directors of the 1970s and 1980s. Paul Leduc's *Frida* (1984) relies on images rather than

Salute for Mexican wave

The centenary of film south of the border is to be marked by a two-month NFT festival

Financially this film was a disaster. It took de Fuentes's next picture, *Over on the Big Ranch* (1936), to initiate a burgeoning of Mexican cinema. This brazenly reactionary portrayal of rural life, where benevolent ranchers and chaste heroines dance and sing their way through a series of jolly bacchanal fiestas, is described as the film which "launched a thousand singing cowboy movies".

Doña Barbara (1943), another de Fuentes classic to be screened in the season, introduces the first Mexican screen idol, Maria Félix, "the devourer of men". Other Latin stars rose in her wake — actors like the elastic-limbed comedian Cantinflas, the Aztec answer to Chaplin, or Dolores Del Rio, catapulted to fame in her role as the forlorn ingenue forced into prostitution in

THE Lindsay Quartet has begun its complete Beethoven cycle at the Wigmore Hall and there is not a ticket to be had. Formed in 1967 at the Royal Academy, resident at Keele, Sheffield and now Manchester University, the Lindsay Quartet are something of a national icon. They have already recorded and won important awards for their complete Bartók and Beethoven, so they know well what they are up against, both in terms of musical conquest and audience expectation.

The sense of occasion, and of the magnitude of the task ahead, was almost palpably passed from players to audience and back again on Wednesday. As if to calm their nerves and tune their spirits, the Lindsay began with Beethoven's arrangement for

Beginners' verve

CONCERT
Lindsay Quartet
Wigmore Hall

string quartet of his Piano Sonata Op 14, No 1, one voice leaping to meet another in highly strung delight. Nerves were still raw, though, in the Op 18, Quartet No 1, in F. The opening up-bows were tense, crunched to spring into the first vibrant chords; sinewy octaves and unisons swung headlong and headstrong into the music's development.

As the Adagio made its slow harmonic progress in a fine

calligraphy of melodic variants, and the Scherzo's synopses snapped, intonation and rhythm came under considerable stress. In hands other than the Lindsay's this might have given cause for concern; but their own excitability, ballasted as it was by strength of idea and perception, seemed to recreate Beethoven's own sense of striving in a work which he perfected only after the other five quartets of the Op 18 had been completed.

If the Lindsay's passions rather than their poise had characterised the first half of the evening, a new balance was found after the interval. It was as if the music itself of the

Op 132 Quartet No 15 in A minor began to harmonise their spirits and earth their energies. From an uneasy beginning, the players began to find their own rhythm as well as that of the music as note values were broken down and melody rose out of fragile part-writing.

Not for nothing was Beethoven's slow movement written in *der Lydischen Tonart*; the great hymn of thanksgiving after his illness is played out in a mode whose own association with restorative solace and joy seemed to permeate the breathing and phrasing of the Lindsay's. After a wonderfully fearless recitative from Peter Cropper's leading violin, the firmly paced finale had all the momentum of total command.

HILARY FINCH

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Building in cyberspace

At architecture's headquarters, RIBA's new boss is embracing the future, says Marcus Binney

Quietly spoken he may be, but Alex Reid, the new director general of the Royal Institute of British Architects, is steadily proving himself the most constructive force for change that RIBA has seen for half a century. Walk into the institute today and you find that the whole ground floor is suddenly open to the public. "We have turned my old office into a competitions gallery," Reid says.

His deputy's office has become a students' gallery with a changing monthly show mounted by the students themselves. "We now have seven exhibition galleries where there were just two," he says.

Outside the main entrance, a billboard invites you into Patisserie Valerie. "Some of my colleagues were doubtful that a first-floor cafe would ever work, but it's now exceeding its revenue target of £1,000 a day," Reid continues. The cafe and exhibitions are open five days a week from 8am to 6pm.

The first-floor terrace will come to life on February 5 when Reid switches on the William Pye water sculpture that captivated last year's Royal Academy summer exhibition. This is a trellis of water jets accompanied by sound and light. An awning will follow shortly, allowing the cafe to spill out of doors.

To the horror of the old guard, RIBA is overflowing with people who are not architects. That transformation is partly thanks to Reid's unusual career. He spent five years as a helicopter pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, serving in Borneo and doing search and rescue work in the English Channel, before going to study at the Bartlett School of Architecture. Subsequently he worked in long-range studies at British Telecom and then set up as a "doctor" for computer firms.

Reid's achievement is to create the architecture centre everyone wants entirely financed from member subscriptions and sponsorship. This year will see the bookshop trebled in size; an architectural film festival and exhibitions on subjects ranging from children's perception of architecture to the new generation of Japanese architects. The new Thursday evening

public lectures are a sell-out.

RIBA's imposing headquarters have more than a touch of the *Queen Mary*, with sumptuous Deco interiors and a sweeping ballroom staircase. The pleasure lies in exploring the building. Next in line will be the sixth floor where Reid has secured the agreement of Sir Norman Foster and Sir Richard Rogers to fit out two rooms for conferences. "We wanted two of our gold medalists to be on permanent show and they have agreed to help us find the sponsors to pay for it."

"We have funding from the Crown Estate Commissioners to research what kind of advice clients need. We're helping our 23,000 members with literature for their clients. We provide all-comers with a list of five suitable architects for anything from a loft extension to an opera house."

He accepts that RIBA has failed to make much impact on the design of the vast mass of new houses built today. "Too much is driven by being inoffensive. Look at the modern motor car. It's a better product in every way than 20 years ago; better looking, more efficient and more economical. You can't say this of houses. So we have to start a major debate."

He is also keen to champion RIBA's conservation role. "Many of our conservation-orientated members use advanced technology. I wrongly imagined that a practice specialising in cathedrals would work with quill pens, but they are using computer photography to chart every wobbly stone."

What about my children, I ask. They are into building cities on the Apple Mac. Reid replies: "I will rise to the challenge. By January next year we will have *Sim City* and CD-Rom installed for the public. I would like an arcade arrangement like Las Vegas where people can walk up to screens and interact. This year we are creating an electronic network of architecture. If *The Times* can go on the Internet, we can put an analogy of our building into cyberspace so everyone can tour it from home."

● RIBA is at 66 Portland Place, London W1 (0171-580 5533)

EDUCATION

Parents must face the music

Michael Barber says parents should be compelled to meet teachers

The idea of a Learning Society, a society in which every citizen is an active learner throughout life, is rapidly gaining currency. It has been an ideal for years. Now it is perceived as a matter of economic survival.

This explains why companies such as BT and Thorn EMI are signing up to support Sir Christopher Ball's important Campaign for Learning.

These awareness-raising activities will need to be followed up with changes in policy if Britain is serious about getting ahead of its international competitors.

The policy of the present is school improvement. Last summer Gillian Shephard launched her Improving Schools initiative. In December, Tony Blair and David Blunkett published their education programme, Excellence for Everyone, which offers the prospect of a comprehensive national strategy for the promotion of school improvement. Both the Government and the Opposition have also spelt out the corollary of this new trust in schools — that where schools fail there will be intervention in the interests of pupils.

This drive for school improvement is an essential phase in the creation of an

education service fit for the 21st century. Whether on its own it will be sufficient is much less clear. Vigorous and constructive though it is likely to be, its limitations need to be acknowledged, too. One is that even in improving schools there are individual pupils who slip through the net of educational success.

Furthermore, the focus on school improvement casts the parent in the role of innocent bystander. Although some schools make tremendous efforts to involve parents, the emphasis of policy has been on parental rights rather than responsibilities.

Yet the research evidence consistently confirms common sense. The role of parents as co-educators of their children is fundamental, both in supporting the school and in providing additional learning opportunities elsewhere, such as museum visits or participation in educational activities outside school. But, above all, supportive parents give precious time to the encouragement of learning at home.

All this undoubtedly helps young people to achieve more, but it leaves a huge policy question wide open. If we truly want a Learning Society, we have to do something about children whose parents lack either the necessary will or the

means to support their education in this way. Educators have attempted various strategies to encourage parents to become more involved in the education of their children. Schools have worked hard with mixed success at attracting parents to parents' evenings. Some have tried voluntary home-school contracts. These have been beneficial but have not done enough to bring home to parents just how important their responsibilities are. The overwhelming emphasis on rights for parents, while broadly positive, has, by implication, diminished the importance of meeting their responsibilities.

If we are serious about the creation of a Learning Society, this will have to change. Parents should be given a statutory duty, not only to see that their child attends school, as at present, but also to attend meetings with their child's teacher at least once every six months. At the meeting the parent and teacher should set targets for that child's learning over the next six months and decide the scope of their responsibilities.

This would have a number of advantages. Parents would be clear about how they could contribute. They would also be clear about what they could expect from the school. Meanwhile, schools would benefit from the support they deserve but often do not get at present.

Above all, it would reduce the chances of any individual child slipping through the net. To make this work a means would need to be found of making available resources to support learning out of school in disadvantaged areas. This could be done in two ways. First, after-school study support centres, where young people could do their homework and have access to information technology and to supportive adults, should be established in every disadvantaged location in the country. There is plenty of experience to build on, much of it supported by the Prince's Trust. It works, and the cost of providing a national network of centres would be less than 0.5 per cent



A parent attends a school meeting, as seen by Rockwell. But should it be compulsory?

of current national expenditure on schools.

Secondly, the possibility of providing vouchers to parents on low incomes for the purchase of educational resources for the home should be considered. It would be a condition of the voucher that it could be spent only on resources agreed at the statutory meetings between parent and teacher.

This sounds expensive, but vouchers worth £200 per year for the parents of the poorest four million children could be paid for, with change to spare, by taxing child benefit. The vouchers could be spent on time at a study support centre or, for example, on providing software or books.

It would be a clear policy signal that in a Learning Society the opportunity to learn is as basic and important as food, warmth and shelter.

No doubt objections other than cost will be raised. The issue of how to enforce parental attendance at school meetings will certainly arise and should be faced. The fact that attendance was a statutory duty would encourage parents and schools to give it priority. This alone would ensure that many more parents than at present would attend.

Where a parent did not attend, the main concern would be for the child. A mentor from the community could be appointed for all children whose parents regularly failed to attend. Of course, there will always be handfuls of completely irresponsible or even destructive parents. This proposal would help to draw attention to the plight of their children as a first step to doing something to help them.

Everyone agrees that the creation of a Learning Society is essential. It will not be easy. Schools, however much they continue to improve, cannot do it alone. Only if government and parents, as well as schools, take their responsibilities seriously can we make it happen.

● The author is Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. He is delivering a lecture on this theme to the North of England Education Conference today.

Do as I say, but not as I do?

Susan Elkin on the need for teachers to set an example

Before Christmas, I visited a split-site school in which the two buildings lie, less than conveniently, on opposite sides of a busy main road. Of course, there is a footbridge and strict rules about pupil use of it. So how on earth can the teachers in that school justify their own dangerous weaving and dashing across the road through the traffic?

I was there less than two hours and saw several instances of this "do as I say, but not as I do" behaviour. The divisive and automatic assumption that it's fine to have two sets of rules in a school is so ingrained in many teachers that they never stop to think it might have something to do with problematic pupil behaviour in the classroom.

Elsewhere I have seen one-way traffic rules on staircases strictly enforced for everyone except staff. I taught in one school where the senior staff were extremely tough about girl students wearing boots in the winter — and equally firm about bare legs in the summer. Both rules were ignored by the female teachers.

Then there are the teachers who shout — often abusively — at their pupils. They are usually among the first to complain about vicious pupil aggression. And it is often the same people who expect pupils to run errands for them who do not bother to say please and thank you. Surly behaviour is catching and it's no good these people complaining that pupil courtesy is a thing of the past.

Not having to follow the same rules is a symbolic demonstration of staff superiority. Pupils are merely

underlings. We live today, however, in a very egalitarian climate, which schools reflect. Children are taught that their human rights transcend age, class and race — and rightly so. But for those teachers who pay mere lip-service to equality, pupil rebellion will ensue.

Teachers who have the fewest incidents of unacceptable behaviour among the pupils they teach are those who role-model a high standard of commitment, concern, conformity and courtesy.

The mixed message emitted by a teacher who belittles "How dare you raise your voice at me?" at some hapless miscreant, or by one who fights through the scrum on the stairs but sends back a child doing the same thing, is dangerous.

As far as possible, schools should have agreed rules which everyone abides by. The agreement part is vital, too. If pupils and staff discuss these things together the consensus is almost always, in my experience, a commendable commonsense solution. If, for example, a community decides — for reasons of safety and to prevent mess and litter — that no drinks should be carried round the building but that consumption should be confined to designated places, then that should apply to staff.

If teachers and pupils are to work successfully together there needs to be a high level of mutual respect. To give pupils less than a strong positive example prevents that mutual respect developing and can only perpetuate discipline difficulties in schools.

EDUCATION

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White ball misbehaves at the green-baize charity party

Performing for pocket money

Snooker is not a game with which I have had a meaningful relationship. I own neither a waistcoat nor a snooker stick and though, over the years, I have played a number of games — and got a blue at Oxford, sadly missed the ensuing pink — I have yet to put together a break.

When I received this letter asking me to play in a pro-am charity game in Birmingham and read the sentence: "Don't worry if your snooker skills are a little rusty", I accepted. I chose Stephen Hendry as my



Hendry, potting for a worthy cause, is watched by his partner, borrowed cue at the ready. Photograph: Marc Aspland



FREUD ON FRIDAY

partner: the money we were to raise was for an excellent cause and the sponsor the charity-minded Liverpool Victoria — a company that set out in 1843 with the object of affording the poorer classes of society with a means to provide a decent interment at the trifling expense of a halfpenny a week (more if you were older). Last year, the company was "repositioned" as Liverpool Victoria The Friendly Society with assets in excess of those of Stephen Hendry.

The International Conference Centre, Birmingham, where we performed, is a construction of splendour with many helpful folk bearing badges inscribed Event Management, guiding guests to the hospitality-room, where comfortable waitresses trod the carpets thrusting skewers of bacon-wrapped sausage and chicken tikka at the throng. In the corner opposite the bar was the snooker table, where those whose skills were dulled by brilliance at other pastimes could practise: Mr Gary Mason, a jovial heavyweight boxer; Mr Nicholas Parsons, a

comedian of different avoirdupois and Dr Hilary Jones, a medical communicator, joined me in a game which differed from that showing on the television monitor in that the number of balls on our table remained constant. Probably luck: mine is out. At the South China Golf Club last month I lost two balls in the ball-wash and on Christmas Day the pudding was stamped "best before December 24".

At the end of each first-round match in the £300,000 Liverpool Victoria Charity Challenge it is amateur time. An engaging woman, who later in the evening asked whether I had really not known that it was she who presented the weather on GMTV, introduced the pros

and the ams and they spun a wheel to determine the length of the game of Potting for Pounds: Willie Thorne and Nicholas Parsons had two and a quarter minutes; taking alternate shots, they had a score of 23 and spun another wheel to give the quotient by which to multiply the points: got £90, so MIND benefited by £2,070.

I was due to partner the world champion after his tie with John Higgins; the game was for the greater prosperity of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, tee-off at 9pm.

As snooker is an unpredictable game, the Hendry-Higgins match lasted three hours so it was at 11.15pm that I received my introduction, fol-

lowed by a lukewarm round of applause punctuated by the sounds of many spectators trying to leave.

The difference between snooker as played with friends and the professional game is equipment.

Pros have their own, carry it around in embossed leather cases. I came as I was and when the referee made "hey're off" noises I announced that attack is ever the best form of defence. I ordered the man with the white gloves to clean the balls — all of them. My cue arrived. I cancelled my request.

Bad golfers, when faced with significant putts, get the yips. I am pleased to say that under the stress of competition

and the lights and the cameras, my hands on the borrowed snooker bat remained steady.

It was my luck that was out and while it had been my intention to hit quick, short, slow shots to enable the world champion to pocket the colours and take the glory, that game-plan misfired. In the short time at our disposal it was I who found the pocket, twice, sank the white cue ball each time.

A temporary setback for the amateurs but it should be remembered that it was our lot who built the Ark: professionals built the Titanic.

I shall hang up my waistcoat but will try to get up early and watch GMTV's weather report.

SPORTS LETTERS

Batsmen lacking in skills

From Mr Bruce Cowles

Sir, To cricket lovers the game has many unique qualities, but yet another is emerging.

There can surely be no other game in which those who represent this country in international contests display such a lack of the basic requirements of their craft. I refer to our batsmen.

In a Test match, with all the time in the world to build an innings, and facing the world's best bowling, the prime requirement must be survival. Yet, we see one batsman after another succumbing to catches, mostly to the wicketkeeper or slips with shots that from a defensive point of view need never have been played and from a run-scoring point of view (to which one can add some hook shots) are to say the least highly ill-judged.

If one were to film the efforts of our first six Test batsmen throughout a match it would show that in 30 per cent of their shots the feet are in the wrong position. In a few classic instances, they have not moved an inch from the commencement of the bowler's run-up. Brian Lara's footwork is to them as Nureyev is to Harry Champion. Ally to this a general inability to play down the line of the ball and

the malaise is there for all to see.

Why is this? The one-day game no doubt contributes much and possibly the MCC plan of producing coaches en masse some three decades ago had some effect.

Our mature commentators — the likes of Fred Trueman, Geoff Boycott, Trevor Bailey and Raymond Illingworth — make reference at times, but rarely say with force what must surely be in their minds. It is not fair for the last mentioned to assume responsibility for England's displays when he just does not have the material.

The depressing thing is that the younger players who are emerging in the early batting order display the same failings. Our Test batsmen provide examples for today's youngsters. Where are our coaches?

The ability of batsmanship, to counter anything that a bowler can produce on any pitch, is a wonderful art, but performers are a very endangered species indeed, if not already extinct.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE COWLES,
The Coach House,
New Barn Lane,
Ockley,
Surrey.

Clubs must have role

From Mr Noël K. Armstead

Sir, The Rugby Football Union (RFU) Commission report, "Open rugby — the right to decide", has yet to be approved. The RFU is under pressure from the counties association to defer final decisions for a further 12 months. If this suggestion is adopted, the game will be truly split and far from "seamless", which is the RFU's declared aim. The first and second division clubs will declare independence as there are sponsors waiting in the wings.

If the RFU is to remain truly the governing body of the whole game, then the administration needs to be further revised, reflecting the playing strengths of the game. The RFU council needs to be staffed with representatives from the league structure throughout, for this is now where the game is played. The first and second division clubs have already made this clear by resigning from the National Clubs Association, which they believe does not represent them properly.

Such a radical proposal will not be welcomed by the RFU at this stage, as it is walking a tightrope in an effort to try to keep everybody moderately happy. Compromise is the most ineffective solution when there are entrepreneurs outside the ring, ready to pay the piper and call the tune.

The RFU must be brave, acknowledge the new order and drag the administration, albeit screaming, into the 21st century.

Tell the counties that they still have a very important function to fulfil by administering rugby at all levels up to the age of 20, organising coaching and selection and, most of all, liaising with schools and colleges to ensure that the game reaches as many youngsters as possible.

The Government has a declared policy to encourage the development of sport in schools through connections with clubs and the counties would be able to administer this effectively.

Yours faithfully,
NOEL K. ARMSTEAD,
8 Chiswick Lodge,
Liston Road,
Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

Glasgow rift

From Mr Terence Wynn

Sir, I agree with much of the article written by Kevin McCarra ("Legacy of throx lost amid intolerance of divided loyalties", January 1) concerning the sectarian rift which continues to divide the supporters of Rangers and Celtic in Glasgow. However, I note that he did not advance any solutions himself, presumably because there is no solution.

Those of us old enough to remember the disaster at Ibrox Stadium on January 2, 1971, are able to experience again the shock and horror which shook the nation as well as Glasgow.

McCarra might have mentioned the memorial mass in St Andrew's Roman Catholic Cathedral in the city, which was attended by the Rangers team and the directors when

Archbishop Scanlon publicly embraced the Rangers chairman as a sign of reconciliation and sympathy.

Efforts to unite the supporters, however, are likely to be no more successful than the pitiful attempt to pay respect to the young Celtic supporter killed when he passed a Rangers area.

The untying of the scarves bearing the colours of both clubs, which had been left as a memorial, and the dumping of the flowers in a waste bin said more than any words can convey.

Yours sincerely,
TERENCE WYNN,
Bosco Villa,
30 Queen's Road,
South Benfleet, Essex.

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Lake's retirement ends career of massive potential

By DAVID MADDOCK

THE sport of football rarely justifies its overblown hype. Paul Lake announced news yesterday that, for once, deserved the pathos it inevitably generated. Lake, 27, has decided to end a painful struggle that has occupied him for the best part of six years, and retire from football. It is a sad loss to a game in need of the refreshing honesty that typified the Manchester City midfielder.

Lake had an immense talent that took him, even as a comparative novice, to the verge of the England team. A debilitating cruciate ligament injury cut him down just at the stage when he seemed likely to emerge as a player of genuine international pedigree.

The fateful moment came on September 27, 1990. Since then Lake has endured 15 operations and countless false dawns in a brave attempt to return to the game that, he tearfully admitted yesterday, he loves. As 1996 dawned he finally gave up the unequal struggle against constant biting pain and ultimately impossible odds.

Howard Kendall, the manager of Manchester City at the time of the initial injury, received the news yesterday by saying that the international

stage had lost the chance to witness a player of truly great potential. "It is not just Manchester City's loss it is England's as well, because he would have been captain of his country for years," he said. "He was one of the greatest talents of his generation."

Lake was injured against Aston Villa; a ruptured cruciate ligament was discovered. Several operations followed, and the Manchester-born player returned to first-team action after two seasons, full of hope. It was a short-lived optimism. In only his second game back, against Middlesbrough on August 19, 1992, he collapsed after eight minutes with the same injury. For



Lake: 15 operations

three and a half more years he fought a difficult personal struggle. Yesterday was the end of that fight.

Speaking in a quiet corner of Manchester City's training ground, where he has suffered manfully for so long in what has been a lonely struggle, Lake found it hard to hold back the tears. As a player he always had style and dignity; he maintained that yesterday, even during such a sad occasion.

"Firstly, I have a number of people to thank," he said. "I have been through about 15 operations and nearly 5½ years of enduring pain, most days. Without the support of my wife, my family and my close friends, this would have been over a long time ago."

"I'd also like to thank all the staff at the club, and all the wonderful fans who have given me so much support. People might say I have been very unlucky, but to have played over 100 games for this great club has been a privilege." A composed player, Lake possesses a strength of spirit that saw him through years of struggle that would have defeated lesser men.

His last hope came in early 1993 when he visited an American specialist, Dom Sisto, to have a ligament transplant. Sisto has performed the same operation on many American football players, and boasted a 100 per cent success rate. Lake was to prove, sadly, his only failure.

Lake said: "The specialist in America was great, but he warned me that he couldn't guarantee anything because perhaps by that stage too much damage had been done. I trained over the Christmas period, and with the pain that I was getting it was logical to say enough is enough and it's time to get on with the rest of my life."

The former England Under-21 and B player hopes now to retrain in football as a physiotherapist. Manchester City will give him a testimonial match — those who saw his unfulfilled promise as a player will wish him well.



Jones, pictured at his Edgeley Park ground, believes Stockport County can pull off an FA Cup surprise. Photograph: Brian Williamson.

Jones warms to Goodison Park mission

David Maddock on the former Everton player who is looking forward to a dream day for Stockport County

David Jones has that look an interviewer dreads. Slightly ragged, bloodshot, weary eyes: it is the look of a man who has had enough... hours ago. We are sitting in his office and he is discussing, yet again, his former club, Everton.

Jones is the manager of Stockport County, the Endleigh Insurance League second division club, and his delight — indeed, incredulity — can be imagined when they were drawn to face Everton in the FA Cup third round. He is a born-and-bred Evertonian, and played more than 100 games for the club. He still lives on Merseyside, and his family is split down the middle between red and blue.

It is, he believes, Stockport's biggest game for 30 years, and because of his connections he is a natural focus for attention. After a week of build-up, he is drained.

"I still love Everton. I was

with Liverpool as a kid but jumped at the chance when I was offered a move to Goodison," he explained.

"Now everyone wants to know about it. I understand that, and I'm glad of the publicity for Stockport, but it's not really about me now, is it? It's about the players."

Jones is a football enthusiast, the bedrock on which the lower leagues are built and a man who typifies why some saw it as immoral for the first division clubs to attempt to condemn their less powerful partners to oblivion by breaking up the league. Jones has a passion about the game, and a passion for Stockport County.

"I've been asked if I really think we can cause an upset at Goodison. I'll tell you this, if there is anyone who doesn't



FA CUP

think that, they won't be on the bus on Sunday," he said.

"We are a club which is planning for the future. We have a decent stadium, sound finances and good players. We are aiming for the first division, and we should be capable of an upset. When I was at Everton, we were held to a draw by non-league Altrincham in the Cup — that says everything."

Jones is a genuine man, and everything he says carries conviction. He discusses, in-

telligently, the state of the game. It is better, he argued, than many critics suggest. His own side proved that when they performed admirably at Aston Villa in the Coca-Cola Cup, before going down 2-0.

It would be a terrible mistake, he believed, if smaller clubs were forced to go part-time, because they are the lifeblood of the game, and simply would not survive. The problem for Jones, and every other manager outside the FA Cup, is that the gap is growing wider.

Inevitably, though, the conversation returns to Everton. He was a player there in the late Seventies, and played in the League Cup final against Aston Villa. Everton lost after two replays, that was nothing

though, compared with the FA Cup semi-final defeat by the dreaded Liverpool.

"Bryan Hamilton scored what should have been the winner, but a terrible refereeing decision denied us. People ask me how long I felt sick afterwards. How long since that game? 19 years — well I've felt sick for 19 years."

Jones joined Coventry City soon after for what was then a handsome fee of £260,000. An England career beckoned after under-23 appearances, and the suggestion, from Don Revie, of a call-up into the senior squad. A knee injury put paid to it all. But he is not bitter, and still plays in the Southport Sunday League.

Despite the attachments, there will not be too much emotion on the return. "I don't want to look back," he said, "although I suppose I'm a bit upset already — I can't play for my Sunday team in the morning."

Venables stakes claim for his players' time

TERRY VENABLES will launch England's preparations for the European championship finals by twice gathering his squad for training in the next six weeks. The England coach, without a match until Bulgaria play at Wembley on March 27, is in no mood to waste time with the finals a little more than five months away.

His first squad session will be held at England's regular headquarters at Bisham Abbey, near Marlow, with between 20 and 22 players likely to be asked to report on Monday evening, January 22. They will work together up

to and including Thursday, January 25, with Venables asking any players involved in the West Ham v Manchester United match in the FA Carling Premiership on the Monday to report afterwards.

However, he expects to lose some candidates to Coca-Cola Cup replays that will be held that week.

The second get-together will switch to the Midlands and Aston Villa's training ground near The Belfry, a similar-sized squad assembling on Monday, February 12, again staying together until the Thursday.

Shiel commits himself to Leicester

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

RUGBY union's burgeoning transfer market, which has tended towards Newcastle and London so far this season, drifted into the Midlands yesterday when Leicester, the league champions of England, announced their first signifi-

cant capture of the open era from Melrose, the new Scottish champions.

Graham Shiel, 25 and capped 15 times by Scotland, has registered with Leicester, and Tony Russ, the director of rugby at Welford Road, said: "We look forward to playing him next season. He'll be a great addition to our squad."

Shiel, who played against Leicester for the Barbarians last month, will offer badly-needed quality in the Leicester midfield, but their success represents a further blow for Melrose, who are already resigned to losing Dookie Weir to Newcastle and may start to wonder whether they can hang on to Craig Chalmers, the Scotland stand-off half. He has been connected with various English clubs and, if he believes that Melrose's successful XV is breaking up, may be tempted to renew overtures elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Cardiff will field an unchanged XV in the Heineken Cup final against Toulouse at the Arms Park on Sunday. Their match squad of 22 includes 17 internationals, of whom Jonathan Davies and Nigel Walker are among the replacements.

The Welsh Rugby Union has confirmed the appointment of Terry Cobner to the new post of director of rugby, based at Cardiff Institute of Higher Education. Cobner, who won 19 caps for Wales at flanker between 1974 and 1978 and was the most influential forward on the 1977 British Isles tour of New Zealand, will leave his teaching post at Oundle next month.

His contract will take him to the end of the 1990 World Cup, to be hosted by Wales, and puts him at the head of an expanding empire that includes Kevin Bowring, the national coach, David Clark, the national fitness adviser, and five development officers — Jonathan Davies, Jonathan Humphreys, Derwyn Jones, Justin Thomas and Gareth Thomas — all of whom play or played international rugby.

Waspas have successfully appealed to the Rugby Football Union to have their reorganised Courage Clubs Championship match against West Hartlepool on January 13 postponed as Lawrence Dallaglio and Damian Hopkey will be on England duty.

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A REPORT (January 1) on the decision of the British Cycling Federation to appoint its own team to organise the 1996 World Track Championships after failing to agree terms with Sport for Television Group Ltd was inaccurate in some respects.

Sport for Television Ltd has changed its name once only, to

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